

Annual Report

2020
2021



**Energy & Water
Ombudsman**
Queensland

About this report

ENERGY AND WATER OMBUDSMAN QUEENSLAND 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

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Communication objective

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) provides a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for residential customers and small businesses throughout Queensland who have an unresolved issue with their electricity or gas provider. We also provide this service for residential and small business water customers in South East Queensland.

This annual report presents information about the performance of the Ombudsman scheme for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. It includes our activities and achievements for the financial year against our strategic plan and summarises our future priorities and challenges.

This report is produced under the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*. It has been written for the benefit of our stakeholders, including energy and water consumers, retailers and distributors; and members of Queensland Parliament.

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Attribution

Content from this annual report should be attributed to the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland Annual Report 2020-21*.

Accessibility

We are committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding the annual report, please contact us on 1800 662 837 and we will arrange an interpreter to effectively communicate it to you, free of charge.



This publication is available online from
www.ewoq.com.au/annual-reports

For a printed copy, please contact the Communications and Engagement team by emailing info@ewoq.com.au or phoning us on 1800 662 837.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands, seas and waters of Queensland. We pay our respects to First Nations Elders past and present, and their future leaders, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country. We recognise and respect their valuable contributions to Australia and global society.

Using this report

Navigation



To aid with accessibility and provide different ways of using this document for different audiences, this document is organised into sections which align with the core pillars of our organisation.

Within each of these sections, you can access information in a number of different ways.

At a glance

Dip in and gain a top level overview of each section

Details

Provide a full and detailed account as required by legislation

Learn more

View meaningful related content in other sections and on our website, including case studies, further reading, or additional data.

Key data

As an organisation, we collect, report and analyse a lot of data about our cases. This year we have reorganised our annual report to improve its readability. To ensure the report flows logically and can be read and navigated easily, you'll find key data within each relevant section and the bulk of case data in the appendices (Appendix 1 to 4) starting on page 70.

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Letter of compliance

10 September 2021

The Honourable Michael de Brenni MP
Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen
and Minister for Public Works and Procurement
GPO Box 2457
Brisbane Qld 4001

The Honourable Glenn Butcher MP
Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing
and Minister for Water
PO Box 15009
City East Qld 4002

Dear Ministers

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2020-21 and financial statements for the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland.

I certify that this Annual Report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*, and
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements is provided at page 87 of this annual report.

Yours sincerely



Jane Pires
Energy and Water Ombudsman

Our priorities

We are committed to providing a high-quality, effective and confidential service for residential and small business customers who are unable to resolve issues with their electricity, gas or water supplier.

With offices in Brisbane, Cairns and Rockhampton, we work directly with Queensland customers and suppliers to investigate and resolve disputes.

VISION

Supporting Queenslanders with independent, respectful and effective ways of resolving disputes with energy and water providers.

VALUES



Respect

We act and interact with honesty and integrity —manners, respect and courtesy are a given.



Integrity

Our actions are consistent with our words and we demonstrate our values through our actions.



Competency

We encourage each other and seek opportunities to learn, and share our knowledge and ideas to continuously improve ourselves and our service.



Accountability

Each of us is accountable and responsible for our work, attitude and behaviours.



Excellence

We strive to be the best we can be and deliver excellent service and quality results.

HISTORY

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) was first established as the Energy Ombudsman Queensland (EOQ) on 1 July 2007, to provide a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for small electricity and reticulated gas customers in Queensland.

On 1 January 2011, EOQ became EWOQ as our jurisdiction expanded to also investigate disputes about water suppliers in South East Queensland.

Our role, structure and strategic direction

OUR ROLE

Our primary functions are to:

- receive, investigate and facilitate the resolution of disputes between Queensland's small energy customers and small water customers in South East Queensland, and their energy and water retailers and distributors
- promote our services throughout Queensland to those who may need our assistance
- identify systemic issues arising from complaints received from our customers.

We achieve this through a process that is free, fair, independent, accessible, accountable, effective and efficient. We take into account the rights and responsibilities of customers and scheme participants under relevant legislation, codes and standards to achieve a fair and reasonable outcome.

OUR STRUCTURE

EWOQ was established under the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006* to provide for investigation and resolution of particular disputes involving energy and water providers.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman is not subject to direction from anyone, however, considers the advice of the Advisory Council to the Energy and Water Ombudsman in performing certain functions under the Act.

The executive management group assists the Ombudsman in delivering EWOQ's strategic plan and the day-to-day operations of the business.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Each year, we develop a four-year strategic plan that guides our work and confirms our vision for the office.

During 2020-21, our key priorities included:

- implementing a new cloud-based telephony system
- introducing live web chat on the new website
- launching the member portal to improve communication with scheme participants
- reviewing our dispute resolution process to continuously improve customer experience
- improving our stakeholder engagement and community outreach programs
- contributing to public policy through insights and submissions
- continuing preparations to expand our services in the energy market, including embedded network customers.

A review of our performance against the strategic plan is on page 20-23.

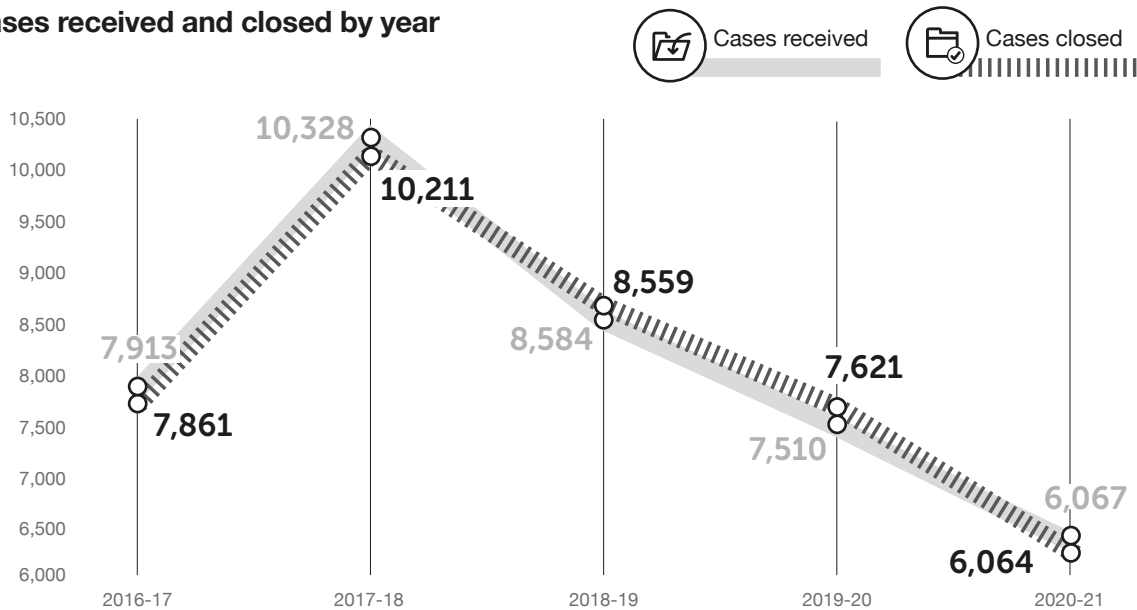
LOOKING FORWARD

We continually review our business processes and customer service delivery to ensure we continue to deliver a timely, effective, independent and fair dispute resolution service to the people of Queensland.

In 2021-22 our key strategic initiatives include:

- building future capabilities
- contributing to reconciliation with First Nations people
- driving efficiencies and effectiveness
- enhancing member management
- enriching customer experience
- raising awareness of our service
- reviewing our customer relationship management solution.

2020-21 highlights

EWOQ closed cases*
6,064
83% ELECTRICITY
8% WATER
6% GAS
Cases received and closed by year


Top 3 issues

1. Billing 58%

2. Credit 11%

3. Provision 10%

Based on complaints (refer backs, referrals to a higher level and investigations)

Who contacted us?

Residents 95%

Small businesses 4%

Government <1%

Monetary outcomes

We negotiated a total of 1,505 outcomes worth \$799,140 for customers

Top five monetary outcomes

	Number	Amount
1. Billing adjustment	296	\$248,608
2. Refund/EFT issued	139	\$180,151
3. Goodwill gestures	733	\$170,054
4. Debt waiver	66	\$56,743
5. Fee waived	73	\$54,060

Learn more

For the data

See Appendix 1

*Some cases are not classified as electricity, gas or water

Message from the Ombudsman

As Energy and Water Ombudsman for Queensland, I am pleased to present the 2020-21 annual report. This year we've continued to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on energy and water consumers and providers alike.

While we've largely been able to return to normal activities here in Queensland, snap lockdowns in response to community outbreaks of COVID-19 have become a regular part of our 'new normal'. This acts as a reminder of the long term effects the pandemic has on us all.

The Australian Energy Regulator's Statement of Expectations continued until 30 June 2021. This ensured that energy consumers had additional protections, including support with payment plans and deferrals along with a pause on disconnections and collections.

This increased support for customers led to a decrease in our case numbers this year. However, our service has been able to increase our role in supporting energy and water customers needing to access information on hardship support, rebates and concessions. This has included a greater focus on awareness raising activities such as community outreach and social media to help ensure that those who need our help know about our service.

We're seeing a positive impact from this work. In the latest Energy Consumers Australia sentiment survey released in June 2021, 33 per cent of Queensland respondents were familiar or very familiar with EWOQ, compared with 28 per cent in December 2020. For South East Queensland, 37 per cent were familiar or very familiar with EWOQ, increasing from 28 per cent in December 2020.

Following our return to the office after an extended work from home period, we're now offering all team members across our three offices in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Cairns access to flexible work arrangements, with many of our team now working from home two days each week.

It was great to be able to hit the road again during the last six months visiting regional communities and connecting with colleagues in the community sector, including financial counsellors and neighbourhood centres. We have also increased our face-to-face outreach with First Nations communities, visiting Cairns, Cherbourg, Inala, Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island), the Moreton Bay region and Townsville.

OUR CASES

During 2020-21, electricity made up the bulk of our caseload, accounting for 83 per cent of the 6,064 cases closed. Our total cases closed fell 20 per cent from 7,621 cases in 2019-20. This decrease was consistent with the experience of other energy and water ombudsmen offices across Australia.

We believe the protections set out in the Statement of Expectations and steps taken by our scheme participants

to improve their internal dispute resolution processes to better support their customers has contributed to the downward trend of our case numbers.

We encourage these initiatives as they are in the best interests of consumers. Our efforts to raise awareness of our service and continued promotion of the requirement for consumers to contact their retailer or distributor first is also reflected in this result.

Billing disputes continue to make up the majority of complaints we receive, followed by credit-related issues (including payment difficulties, hardship and debt listings), which is consistent with previous years. Our third most common complaint area is provision, which are problems with new or existing connections, followed closely by customer service issues.

It was also interesting to note that water-related cases overtook gas-related cases this year for the first time in the scheme's history.

OUR CONTRIBUTION

As a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for energy and water consumers, we are committed to ensuring our service evolves with both consumer and member expectations.

Over the past 12 months, we have continued to focus on streamlining our service, particularly around improving customer experience across case management, telephony and online channels.

Our new cloud-based telephony system, incorporating enhanced call and customer functions along with improved quality assurance and reporting, was launched in July 2020.

This allowed us to introduce a web chat option on the EWOQ website to provide greater contact options for customers in real time.

In May 2021, we launched our member portal which allows our scheme participants to update their team's contact details and those with sufficient caseloads can view static reports about their cases. Development of the portal continues, with further reporting and communications functions planned in the future.

During 2020, we engaged Cameron Ralph Khoury to conduct an independent review of our scheme to help us understand how well we're performing against the benchmarks for industry-based customer dispute resolution.

The review, which was undertaken during COVID-19 restrictions, involved broad stakeholder consultation,

in-depth analysis of our processes, procedures, data and management oversight mechanisms and review of a representative sample of recent disputes.

The findings and recommendations of the independent review were released in December 2020 and concluded that EWOQ meets all six benchmarks for industry-based customer dispute resolution. The review found that 'EWOQ operates with independence, fairly and impartially. It provides an accessible service that is accountable and transparent. EWOQ is, in our view, an effective ombudsman scheme'.

The report findings and recommendations provided us with valuable insights and advice that have been incorporated into our strategic plan.

OUR PEOPLE

During 2020-21, we continued to invest in and support our people. Flexible working arrangements have been embraced across the organisation over the past 12 months and we continue to demonstrate our ability to all work remotely during lockdown periods.

Leadership development, succession planning and talent management has been a focus in 2020-21, with the leadership team taking part in a coaching program.

We continue to provide our employees access to learning and development opportunities. We strive to create a workplace where diversity is celebrated, health and safety is valued, the wellbeing of employees is prioritised and career development is encouraged.

I am proud of our results in the 2020 Working for Queensland employee opinion survey, with 92 per cent of our team sharing their thoughts and perceptions of what it's like to work at EWOQ.

Positive results were seen across all areas of the survey, particularly in relation to leadership and engagement, performance and development, and effectiveness and innovations. Our results were higher than the overall Queensland public sector scores and showed significant improvements on our 2019 results.

OUR CONNECTIONS

Community outreach and stakeholder engagement are an important part of our service.

During 2020-21, our outreach program focused on connecting with consumers in regional areas and customers in financial difficulty, who we reach through our relationships with financial counsellors and community organisations. We continued to grow and foster relationships with First Nations communities through our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

During the time when face-to-face outreach activities were cancelled or postponed, we continued to create opportunities to raise awareness of our services by other means, including webinars and social media.

In October, our webinar series about supporting energy consumers financially affected by COVID-19 brought together energy companies with financial counsellors and

community organisations to discuss how to deliver fair and reasonable outcomes for energy consumers experiencing financial difficulty – often for the first time.

It was a great feeling to connect face-to-face with financial counsellors at both the annual Financial Counsellors' Association of Queensland State Conference in Port Douglas in March and the Financial Counselling Australia conference in Darwin in May. As always, both events were a great opportunity to find out about the issues their clients are facing and how we can help.

OUR FUTURE FOCUS

Over the past 12 months, we've continued our future focus in meeting the evolving needs and expectations of customers as well as our scheme participants.

This year, we've spent a lot of time streamlining and improving our service with an ongoing commitment to improving customer experience while also meeting changing industry needs.

This has led to a new service model for our Assessment, Investigation and Resolution team. Under the new model, an early resolution team of investigation and resolution officers are the first point of contact for customers. They manage referrals to other organisations, refer backs and referrals to a higher level. If a case needs to be escalated, it is transferred to the investigations team. This approach enhances service delivery and customer experience and has shown positive results so far. I look forward to sharing more insights on this next financial year.

MY THANKS

While we continue to weather the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic alongside ongoing changes within the energy and water sectors, I have been heartened by the support from across our industry, from my peers in the Ombudsman community and from my EWOQ team.

I am also grateful for the ongoing support and counsel of the Advisory Council, particularly Anna Moynihan who concluded her term as Chair in February.

Working together is a term we hear a lot these days, but collaboration really does make us all stronger and has helped us continue to deliver great results during uncertain times. I am confident we will continue to do so into next year and beyond.



Jane Pires
Energy and Water Ombudsman

A message from the Advisory Council Chair

The past 12 months has been one of the most challenging periods for our nation as the global pandemic continues to impact all of us with changing conditions and snap lockdowns. Throughout 2020-21, the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) continued to deliver its high-quality dispute resolution services for consumers and scheme participants, and successfully adapted to what has become the ‘new normal’.

Even from the start of the pandemic in early 2020, it was evident the consequences of COVID-19 would extend far beyond the 2019-20 reporting period. This has certainly been the case for the energy sector – for both industry and consumers – and the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) has been instrumental in significantly reducing energy related disconnections, debt collection and credit default listings in 2020-21 with their Statement of Expectations of energy business.

For EWOQ, 2020-21 was a year with lower than usual cases as energy complaints fell by 23 per cent as a result of the additional consumer protections provided by the AER. Complaints about water grew by 10 per cent to 350 complaints (though from a low baseline of 318 complaints in 2019-20).

With some of our members in lockdown interstate for months at a time, the Advisory Council to EWOQ continued to meet online during 2020-21. At our first meeting of the new financial year in August, we discussed concerns about the sustainability of regulatory expectations on energy companies to provide leniency with payment of energy bills and more time for customers to pay. Both the consumer and industry representatives around the virtual table agreed this wasn't sustainable in the long term. It was valuable to hear the perspectives of both local and interstate-based industry representatives, feedback from a member on the frontline of consumers' experiences, and the observations from members sitting on national groups.

We also talked in depth to the consultants who had delivered a draft of EWOQ's independent review, which assessed its performance against six benchmarks for industry-based customer dispute resolution – accessibility, independence, fairness, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

We were pleased with the customer satisfaction results from the previous six months, with notable improvements including a 6.8 per cent increase in the ease of finding EWOQ to submit a complaint, a near 15 per cent increase in the effectiveness of services, and upward trends in fairness and independence of services.

Our November meeting included EWOQ's plan for implementing recommendations from the independent review. The report confirmed EWOQ is an effective ombudsman scheme, operating with independence,

fairness and impartially, and accurately captured the operational environment with the following comment:

66 *We found a scheme that is in transition, with a very full agenda. It is subject to a Queensland Government review of its legislation, about to include embedded networks into its jurisdiction, in the midst of a major upgrade of its information technology, adapting to COVID-19 operating restrictions, preparing for the consumer complaints fallout of pandemic-related hardship, and on top of all of that, assisting our firm with an Independent Review.*

EWOQ provided Advisory Council members with its response to the 26 review recommendations, which we were pleased to see were mostly aligned with initiatives already underway. These included establishing a data working group to improve data capture and reporting, and a systemic issue review group to assess what processes could be improved under the current jurisdiction. Some recommendations require legislative changes to the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*, which is outside EWOQ's control.

By our February 2021 meeting, there was concern expressed about rising consumer debt levels. February and March are usually a peak period for EWOQ as customers receive their power bills following increased electricity usage over the summer period. We all breathed a sigh of relief as the AER extended their Statement of Expectations by three months to the end of June, although accrued energy debt remains a concern.

The additional protections provided to energy consumers during the year resulted in 20 per cent fewer cases for

EWOQ, with a total of 6,064 cases closed in 2020-21. Billing, credit and provision were the top three issues consumers contacted EWOQ about, which was consistent with the previous year. More than 200 of the cases closed during 2020-21 were related to COVID-19, with almost two-thirds of these associated with billing.

Our Advisory Council membership had only minor changes this year. Consumer representatives included Ian Jarratt, Queensland Consumers Association; Robyn Robinson, Council on the Ageing Queensland; Sharon Edwards, Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network; and a new nominee from the Queensland Council of Social Service, Wendy Miller. We carried a vacancy for a small business representative. Industry members included our water representative Chris Owen, City of Gold Coast; David Ackland, EnergyAustralia; Iain Graham, Red/Lumo Energy; Jennifer Gates, Energy Queensland; and Rosemarie Price, Ergon Energy. David Ackland and Chris Owen's terms concluded in October 2020, and we hope to see them

both return to the Advisory Council, pending renewal of their membership.

I would like to thank all members for their enthusiasm, expertise and commitment over the past 12 months. Thank you also to the Ombudsman Jane Pires, her management team and staff at EWOQ, and the secretariat for their professionalism and dedication.



Anna Moynihan
Chair (until 18 February 2021)

ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE ENERGY AND WATER OMBUDSMAN

The Advisory Council provides expert advice to the Energy and Water Ombudsman and the Ministers responsible for energy and water about the effective and efficient conduct and operation of the EWOQ scheme. This helps to ensure the scheme is fair and effective for consumers and suppliers.

The Advisory Council:

- monitors the Energy and Water Ombudsman's independence
- advises the Ombudsman on policy, procedural and operational issues relating to the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*
- advises the Ministers responsible for energy and water on the funding of the Ombudsman's functions at the end of the financial year
- advises the Ministers on the Ombudsman's independence and functions of the office during the financial year.

The Advisory Council meets every quarter and includes an independent chair and at least six other members appointed by the Ministers. There must be an equal number of other members representing industry and consumer interests. Under the Act, at least two of the industry members must represent the interests of energy retailers, at least one must represent the interests of energy distributors, and at least one must represent the interests of the water entities.

Members are appointed on the Chair's recommendation, after consultation with scheme participants, consumer groups and community organisations. See Appendix 5 for more information. Read more about the Advisory Council on page 30.

2020-21 MEMBERS

INDEPENDENT CHAIR

Appointment pending

INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES (distributors and retailers)

Iain Graham, Red Energy and Lumo Energy
(from October 2017 to October 2021)

Jennifer Gates, Energy Queensland
(from May 2018 to October 2021)

Rosemarie Price, Ergon Energy Retail
(from August 2016 to October 2021)

CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVES

Ian Jarratt, Queensland Consumers Association
(from September 2007 to October 2021)

Robyn Robinson, Council on the Ageing Queensland
(from August 2016 to October 2021)

Sharon Edwards, Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network
(from October 2019 to October 2021)

Vacant position, Queensland Council of Social Service

MEMBER APPOINTMENTS COMPLETED

Independent Chair

Anna Moynihan (from February 2016 to February 2021)

Industry representatives (distributors and retailers)

Chris Owen, Gold Coast Water and Waste, City of Gold Coast
(from October 2019 to October 2020)

David Ackland, EnergyAustralia
(from April 2019 to October 2020)

Our service

Dispute resolution

At a glance



EWOQ helps Queenslanders resolve disputes with their electricity, gas and water providers.

When a customer contacts us, we listen to their issue and classify it as a general enquiry, refer them to another organisation or back to their energy or water provider, refer the case to a higher level with their provider, or investigate the matter.

Of the 6,064 cases we closed in 2020-21:

- 30% were referred back to an energy or water provider
- 27% were referred to a higher level (RHL) within the energy or water provider
- 20% were investigated
- 13% were referred to another organisation
- 9% were general enquiries

Please note, figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

In detail



As a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service, our approach is based on the principles of alternative dispute resolution.

We seek to establish the facts and issues to help our customers and their provider better understand the problem at hand, and each other's point of view.

The outcome of a complaint may be achieved by agreement between the customer and the provider, or through conciliation based on what we deem as a fair and reasonable outcome.

OUR JURISDICTION

Our service was established to assist customers who use less than 160 megawatt hours of electricity per year or one terajoule of gas per year. In South East Queensland, we also help residential water customers and small businesses with water consumption less than 100 kilolitres a year.

We can investigate unresolved disputes about:

- problems with payment
- account errors and disputes
- disconnections and restrictions
- damages and loss
- energy marketing
- energy contract issues
- vegetation management
- supply quality and reliability
- extensions to supply
- connection of supply
- customer service issues
- guaranteed service levels
- equipment issues
- burst pipes, leaks, blockages and spills.

CASE TYPES

All contacts we receive are called **cases**. This year, there was a 20 per cent decrease in the total number of cases closed from the previous year.

A significant impact on the decrease of cases was the Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) Statement of Expectations and the additional protections it offered customers facing debt collection or disconnection. As a result, there was a 52 per cent decrease in credit-related cases.

General enquiries decreased by 22 per cent, referrals to other organisations decreased by 12 per cent and refer backs to energy and water providers dropped by 15 per cent.

For complaints, Level 3 investigations increased by 16 per cent whereas referral to higher level cases dropped by 16 per cent. Level 1 investigations decreased by 47 per cent and Level 2 by 10 per cent.

Case: any contact a customer has with EWOQ, including general enquiry, refer back to supplier, referral to higher level, investigation, or referral to another organisation.

Complaint: cases that are billed to a scheme participant i.e. refer back to supplier, referral to higher level and investigations.

REFERRAL TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

For disputes outside our jurisdiction, we have memoranda of understanding (MoU) with the following organisations to ensure timely exchange of information and referral of cases, where relevant:

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Australian Energy Market Commission
- Australian Energy Regulator
- Department of Energy and Public Works
- Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water
- Office of Fair Trading
- Queensland Competition Authority
- Queensland Ombudsman.

Issues we refer to these organisations include:

- the fixing of prices or tariffs
- a customer contribution to the cost of capital works
- products such as air conditioners, hot water systems, solar panels and home electrician services offered by electricity retailers
- on-selling of energy or water to tenants in caravan parks, retirement villages and other multi-tenanted dwellings (embedded networks)
- bottled LPG (liquefied petroleum gas)
- electricity consumption of more than 160 megawatt hours a year
- gas consumption of more than one terajoule a year
- water consumption of more than 100 kilolitres a year for small businesses
- metered standpipes, raw water supplies, tradewaste, stormwater harvesting or stand-alone recycled water.

During 2020-21, 13 per cent of the cases we closed (792 cases) were within the jurisdiction of other government authorities.

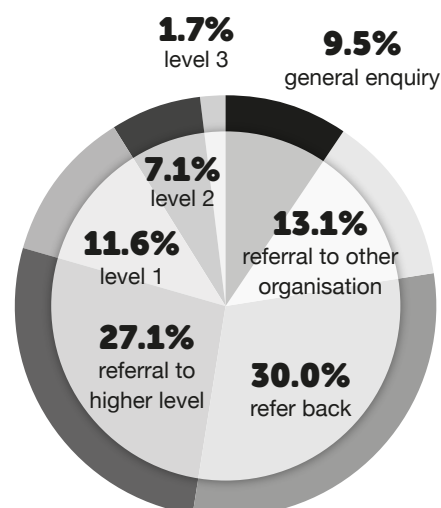
More than half (55 per cent) of these cases were referred to the Office of Fair Trading, including complaints about bulk hot water, bottled gas and solar installation.

Referrals to the AER increased this year, accounting for 32 per cent of referrals.

Key data

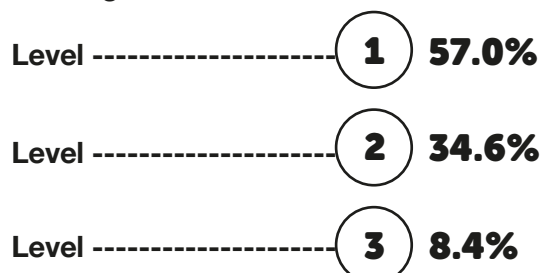
2020-21 Case types

	2020-21	%
1. General enquiry	574	9.5%
2. Referral to other organisation	792	13.1%
3. Refer back	1,819	30.0%
4. Referral to higher level	1,642	27.1%
5. Level 1 investigation	705	11.6%
6. Level 2 investigation	428	7.1%
7. Level 3 investigation	104	1.7%
8. Final order	0	0%



Please note, figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Investigations



Final orders

No final orders were issued this year. Final orders may be issued by the Ombudsman if a matter cannot be resolved via negotiation or conciliation.

See Appendix 1 for figures.

COMPLAINT STAGES

1. Referral to higher level

This process escalates a complaint to a higher level within the energy or water provider. We prepare a referral to higher level (RHL) notice with a summary of the customer's issue for the provider, who are required to contact the customer within five business days.

If contact is not made, or the problem remains unresolved, customers can request us to investigate. This was previously offered as an option to the customer, however from 4 May 2021, a new early resolution dispute process was implemented and an early resolution team member now determines whether the matter is escalated as an RHL or referred to the investigations team to investigate.

2. Investigation

Once an investigation commences, we prepare a notice of investigation which details the customer's issue. The provider is required to respond back to us within 10 business days. The investigation officer will liaise between the customer and provider to achieve a fair and reasonable resolution.

Where our investigation determines the provider's actions were appropriate, the complaint will be closed and the parties advised of the decision and our reasons. Where an error is found, we will try to negotiate a suitable outcome, for example:

- a payment plan for an overdue account
- reconnection of energy supply
- compensation for damage to equipment.

3. Final order

If we cannot achieve informal resolution of the complaint, the matter may be finalised in a number of ways.

Firstly, a decision can be made under section 22 of the Act not to investigate or to discontinue an investigation. There were 30 cases finalised this way in 2020-21.

Secondly, if a matter cannot be resolved by negotiation or conciliation, the Energy and Water Ombudsman may decide to make a final order requiring an energy or water supplier to take certain action.

Among other things, the Ombudsman can order energy and water suppliers to:

- pay compensation
- provide a non-monetary solution to remedy the dispute
- amend a stated charge under the Act
- cancel a negotiated contract
- perform corrective work.

No final orders were issued in 2020-21.

Notice of withdrawal

A customer can withdraw a case during its investigation. There were four notices of withdrawal during 2020-21.

TIME TAKEN TO RESOLVE CASES

This year, we exceeded our service standard targets of closing 80 per cent of cases in 28 days, 90 per cent within 60 days, and 95 per cent within 90 days.

We closed 87 per cent (5,249 cases) in less than 28 days, 98 per cent of cases in less than 60 days (5,937 cases) and 99 per cent of cases in less than 90 days (6,029 cases).

During 2020-21, we continued to keep our referral to higher level (RHL) cases open longer to ensure the actions of the energy or water provider were completed to the satisfaction of the customer.

The increase in the percentage of cases closed within 28 days this year demonstrates our continued commitment to maintain our service delivery standards while also improving our service for customers.

While there was a drop in the overall number of RHLs and investigations this year, Level 3 investigations increased by 16 per cent. This is an indication that the complaints we receive are becoming more complex in nature, requiring more in-depth investigation, while more routine matters are being dealt with more effectively by the energy and water providers, reducing the need to seek our services for less complicated issues.

Key data

Performance targets – time taken to close cases

	Target	2020-21	
Less than 28 days	80%	5,249	87%
Less than 60 days	90%	5,937	98%
Less than 90 days	95%	6,029	99%
More than 90 days	< 5%	35	1%

QUALITY ASSURANCE

We conducted regular quality assurance assessment cycles and introduced additional quality control activities throughout 2020-21. More than 700 cases were assessed during the period to ensure our practices are accurate, efficient, consistent and of a high standard.

In September 2020, we appointed a senior quality officer to review and develop a new quality assurance framework, undertake case assessments, provide feedback and record recommendations to improve quality assurance reporting.

From July to November 2020, we continued a four-week quality assurance cycle. This included monthly case assessments, feedback to team members, monthly reports for managers and a quality review of Level 3 cases. During this time, 174 cases were reviewed.

From February to June 2021, the four-week quality assurance cycle focused on consistency and improvement. Regular quality control measures, monthly Level 3 case reviews and a quality assurance action register were introduced. During this time, 584 cases were reviewed, and 44 recommendations identified for discussion or improvement to ensure consistency across our team and processes.

We will continue to improve our case review process during 2021-22 as we scope plans to automate the quality assurance process.

66 *I could not fault the process or the case officer in any way, shape or form. Totally an efficient process with a fast and positive result.*

After a number of phone calls and emails to my provider I was getting nowhere. At my request, EWOQ stepped in and it was a great result.

Learn more



View our complaints process video

Scan this code to watch our complaints process explainer video.



For the data

- Cases referred to other organisations
- Performance targets – time taken to close cases

See Appendix 1

For more information

www.ewoq.com.au/complaints

Related reading

Our customers – see page 16

Our cases – see page 36

Systemic issues

At a glance



A **systemic issue** is a problem that a customer has with an energy or water company that affects, or could affect, more than one customer. Under the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*, we identify any systemic issues that arise from complaints to us.

There were 128 potential systemic issues recorded in 2020-21, which was a 75 per cent increase from last year. This year, customer service overtook billing as the most common type of systemic issue registered, accounting for 45 per cent of potential systemic issues. Eighty systemic issue notices were issued to scheme participants.

In detail



CAUSES OF SYSTEMIC ISSUES

Many factors can cause a systemic issue, including human error, failed systems and lack of policies or procedures.

IDENTIFYING AND MEASURING SYSTEMIC ISSUES

We identify potential systemic issues in several ways:

- we monitor complaints and identify potential systemic issues through our case management system
- we stay informed about current and emerging systemic issues through advice from the Advisory Council and our relationships with regulators, government organisations and our peer networks with other ombudsmen offices
- scheme participants may tell us about a systemic issue.

RESOLVING SYSTEMIC ISSUES

When we identify a systemic issue, we let the scheme participant know and advise how the issue could be resolved to prevent it from re-occurring. We also tell the relevant regulator if a systemic issue could breach or violate a legislative code or licence.

In 2020-21, 80 systemic issue notices were issued to scheme participants.

Depending on the concern, our identification of systemic issues may lead a scheme participant to:

- redesign products and services
- change organisational practices and procedures
- retrain staff on product and service delivery
- reassess consumer information (e.g. labelling)
- reassess the performance of after-sales service
- receive an early warning about potential product and service defects.

SYSTEMIC ISSUE OUTCOMES

Out of the 128 potential systemic issue cases, 48 were monitored and did not result in a systemic issues notice being issued.

From the 80 systemic issues cases where notices were issued, the following outcomes were identified by the scheme participant (SP) to address:

- 27 issues were addressed by training
- 7 issues led to process improvements
- 6 issues led to system changes
- 1 issue resulted in improved customer communications
- 2 issues are still awaiting an outcome from SPs
- 37 issues resulted in no action taken by the SPs.

HOW SYSTEMIC ISSUE NOTICES HELPED CUSTOMERS

Issue: Billing delay for customer

Outcome: The SP identified a technical exception had been created and this resulted in a billing delay. To avoid this happening in future, a standard operating procedure was created for this exception to minimise the customer impact from a delayed bill.

Issue: Accounts not issued to customer

Outcome: The SP identified an issue in their billing system related to a particular network tariff not being configured correctly in their system. This resulted in some customers not receiving their bill. From their investigation, the SP found that the issue impacted 235 customers overall and they have now successfully remediated all impacted accounts.

Issue: Duplicated direct debit and delays in refund of money to customer

Outcome: The SP found that the cause of this issue was an error with the daily supply charge in the customer's welcome pack. This error had a flow-on effect and resulted in bills being placed on hold and reissued, which then delayed the refunds to the customer. The SP identified other impacted customers and corrected this by checking all affected accounts and re-issued the correct accounts.

Issue: Marketing conduct, approach in shopping centre

Outcome: The SP reviewed two complaints about the same team member and identified this was a one-off incident. However, they proactively worked with their sales partner to run refresher training for all sales agents in South East Queensland to ensure that all sales agents and staff understand the expectations and regulations that they need to abide by.

Key data

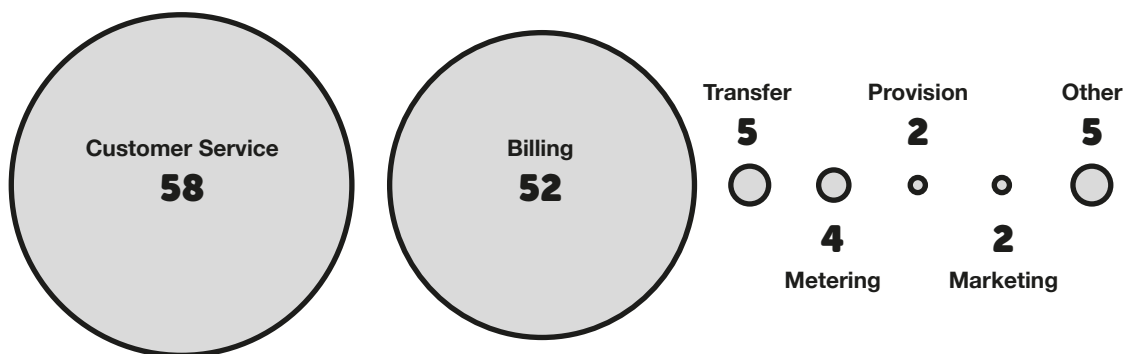
2020-21 case numbers

128 potential systemic issues
80 systemic issue notices sent

Top potential systemic issues:

45% customer service
41% billing

2021 systemic issues



OUR SERVICE

Learn more

Read systemic issues customer stories

Scan the QR code to read about how EWOQ helped resolve systemic issues



For the data

See Appendix 1

For more information

www.ewoq.com.au/systemic-issues

Related reading

Dispute resolution – see page 10

Governance – see page 28

Our customers

At a glance



The majority of our customers are based in South East Queensland, with 86 per cent of complaints coming from the 11 local government areas within this region. Residential customers make up 95 per cent of our cases with most preferring to make their complaint by phone (59 per cent). Online complaints submitted through our website and email continue to grow in popularity.

In detail



TOP 10 LOCATIONS OF OUR CUSTOMERS

OUR CUSTOMERS



Brisbane City Council

30.4% (1,023 complaints)

City of Gold Coast

16.5% (555)

Moreton Bay Regional Council

11.2% (376)

Logan City Council

6.7% (225)

Sunshine Coast Regional Council

6.5% (218)

Ipswich City Council

5.4% (182)

Redland City Council

3.7% (123)

Fraser Coast Regional Council

2.6% (86)

Noosa Shire Council

2.2% (74)

Cairns Regional Council

2.0% (66)

Location figures are based on the incident address and exclude non-residential complaints, and residential complaints where the customer did not disclose a Queensland suburb or postcode or was from interstate or overseas.

For complaints where an incident address was provided, 86 per cent were from South East Queensland, which includes the local government areas of Brisbane, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Logan, Moreton Bay, Noosa, Redlands, Scenic Rim, Somerset and Sunshine Coast.

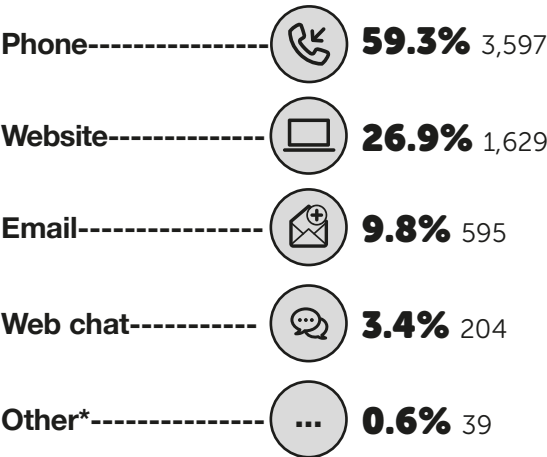
66 *Due to COVID-19 restrictions I was unable to speak to an EWOQ officer in person, but I found the process efficient and was happy to have assistance in gaining a response to a long ongoing concern.*

WHO CONTACTED US?



CONTACT METHOD

How customers contacted EWOQ in 2020-21.



* Other includes Facebook, fax, in-person and letter

Learn more



For location map

Scan this code to view the number of complaints across Queensland's local government areas.



For the data

- Who contacted us – customer profile
- Five-year contact method

See Appendix 1

Related reading

Our cases – see page 36

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

At a glance



We commenced monthly voice of the customer surveying in January 2020 and refined the process to provide greater insights from January 2021. During January to June 2021, voice of the customer surveys were distributed weekly to gather feedback and to examine and enhance our customer experience.

These surveys were sent to customers who had indicated they would participate in an EWOQ customer satisfaction survey and had also had their complaint:

- referred to a higher level within their electricity, gas or water provider
- investigated by EWOQ, or
- referred back to their electricity, gas or water supplier (from April 2021).

These surveys help us improve our service for customers, including how we handle complaints, the information we give our customers about our complaints process, and our skills in talking with customers about their complaints.

The survey is based on the Australian Government's benchmarks for industry-based customer dispute resolution. These benchmarks focus on six key attributes of effective dispute resolution services: accessibility, independence, fairness, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

66 *EWOQ cannot improve anything. I am really happy with my outcome. The process was easy to follow and there is lots of information on their website to read and understand. My case manager was very professional. My sincere thanks to EWOQ who solved my problem after months of trying by myself. I am very grateful there is something like this in Queensland to help people like myself.*

Key data



About our survey respondents

49.1% 48.1%

2.8% preferred not to say

Top three age ranges

1. 65-74 years – 28.7%
2. 55-64 years – 25.9%
3. 45-54 years – 16.7%.

Top three ways customers first learnt about us

Internet search and found EWOQ website – 25.0%

Prior knowledge of EWOQ – 10.2%

From a friend, family member or colleague – 8.3%

Key results

Based on voice of the customer surveying from January to June 2021:

- 80.6% of surveyed customers indicated they would recommend EWOQ to others
- 90.7% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with how courteous, friendly and helpful our team members were
- 88.9% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the ease of finding an ombudsman to complain about an electricity, gas or water retailer
- 75.6% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the time we took to investigate and resolve their investigation complaint.

From April 2021, we extended our voice of customer surveying for refer back customers and found that:

- 62.5% of customers surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied that having their case referred back to their provider was a helpful step
- 50% of customers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the fairness shown by their electricity, gas or water provider in dealing with their refer back complaint.

In detail

Trends and key findings

According to the survey results, customer satisfaction levels vary between those who have had their complaints referred back, referred to a higher level or investigated, with three key measures standing out.

Key measures (satisfied/very satisfied)	Refer back results	Referral to higher level results	Investigation results
1. The effort made by EWOQ staff to listen and fully understand your side of the complaint	75.0%	92.2%	78.0%
2. The knowledge, skills and expertise of EWOQ staff involved in your complaint	81.3%	92.2%	80.5%
3. The final outcome of your complaint	100%	72.5%	68.3%

Referral to higher level (RHL) customers who responded to the survey indicated they were more satisfied compared to the investigations customers who responded.

Customer experience improvements

Over the past 12 months we have undertaken several initiatives to enhance customer experience.

These include:

- trialling the role of a senior quality officer to oversee quality assurance across the dispute resolution team's investigation procedures. This role regularly reviews investigation cases through the quality assurance process and provides feedback each month to EWOQ team members.
- following up with customers who have indicated they were dissatisfied and had also provided contact details. This provides an opportunity for EWOQ to gather further details about their experience, address the customer's concerns and enhance our processes, as required.
- a warm transfer trial with selected scheme participants for refer backs.
- creating a register of local support services to enable our team to offer additional support when a customer mentions they are experiencing issues such as financial hardship or domestic and family violence.
- implementing a new service model for our Assessment, Investigation and Resolution team, including an early resolution approach to manage the RHL process. Investigation and resolution officers are now the first point of contact for customers and manage the referral, refer back and referral to higher level processes. If the case needs to be escalated, it is transferred to the investigations team to enhance service delivery and manage customer expectations.

Learn more

Read our customer satisfaction research

Scan this code to read more about our customer satisfaction research.



For more information

www.ewoq.com.au/customer-surveys

Related reading

Dispute resolution – see page 10

Our connections – see page 24

Our performance against the strategic plan

A four-year strategic plan is prepared annually and describes our vision, objectives, strategies and performance indicators. The strategic plan informs our business plan, which details the activities we need to undertake to achieve our strategic objectives. Our 2020-24 strategic plan focused on our service, our customers, our connections and our people.

OUR SERVICE

Commitment: Our service

We provide a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service, which is evolving with the changing landscape of our sector.

- We are agile and evolve with our sector's changing landscape.
- We embrace change and adapt to emerging technologies and the needs of our sector.
- Our business is robust, accountable, efficient and effective.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS	ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-21
Monitor the number and nature of the complaints we receive to ensure our service evolves with changing technologies and consumer needs, while looking out for issues that may affect our business or customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discharged statutory responsibility, with operational delegations under the EWO Act maintained • 6,064 cases closed, with 87% closed within 28 days
Continue to be financially and environmentally sustainable by improving our systems and processes, and ensuring they remain fair, fit for purpose and adaptable for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided financial reports to the executive management group every month • monitored our compliance with dispute resolution framework, policies and procedures • maintained an audit and risk management committee, with four meetings held in 2020-21 • implemented a new governance framework • actioned the recommendations from the Independent Review (conducted in 2019-20)
Develop solutions that enable us to connect with our customers, communities, teams and others through various digital channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • launched a new cloud-based telephony system • introduced web chat on the website • launched a member portal • added compliments and complaints functionality in our case management system • introduced additional functionality in our case management system to streamline and improve right to information and information privacy requests
Deliver our services within the required, agreed response targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • website available 100% of the time • 57 change requests implemented in our case management system

OUR CUSTOMERS

Commitment: Our customers

We resolve complaints efficiently and effectively, communicating meaningfully and building trust with our customers. If we can't help, we explain why and suggest who can.

- We deliver fair outcomes for consumers and businesses, and provide answers and solutions that are fair for all parties.
- We listen to and respect our customers to build and maintain their trust.
- Our teams have the skills and capacity to resolve wide-ranging problems for our internal and external customers.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS	ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-21
Resolve complaints quickly and efficiently—close 80% within 28 days, 90% within 60 days and 95% within 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87% cases closed in less than 28 days • 98% cases closed in less than 60 days • 99% cases closed in less than 90 days
Continuously improve quality and customer service to ensure customers and members have confidence in our service, and feel our answers are fair and reasonable, regardless of the outcome for them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more than 700 cases assessed through quality assurance assessment cycles • regular reviews of performance-related case data considered and discussed with the team • feedback from customers and scheme participants considered and responded to, as required • section 22 reviews conducted as required, with 30 section 22 letters sent to customers advising that no further investigation will be undertaken • appeal reviews conducted as required, with three appeal reviews undertaken to section 22 decisions
Engage with our customers, members and other stakeholders to understand their problems, needs and expectations, and provide solutions that respond to these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seven customer complaints about our service received, with one complaint resulting in further action and six complaints resulting in no further action • referred 792 cases to other organisations (with whom we have memoranda of understanding) where matters fell within the jurisdiction of other government authorities • total of 1,505 monetary outcomes (worth \$799,140) negotiated for customers, including 296 billing adjustments (\$248,608) and 733 goodwill gestures obtained (\$170,054) • eight new scheme participants approved and welcomed as members • compliance audit completed to ensure scheme participants include our contact details on their websites and disconnection notices
Provide a high standard of service to all our customers, regardless of their location or how they choose to engage with us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completed regular voice of the customer surveying with 80.6% of surveyed customers between January to June 2021 stating that they would recommend EWOQ to others • received 114 compliments about our service and our team members from customers • feedback from scheme participants considered and service improvements implemented, as required • no allegations of failure to afford procedural fairness were made by scheme participants

OUR CONNECTIONS

Commitment: Our connections

We create impact through our connections, raising awareness of our service among communities who may need us and providing value to our members and industry.

- Everyone who needs our help knows we are here and how to contact us.
- We educate consumers about how we can help with energy and water issues.
- We collaborate with community groups that support our current and future customers.
- We connect and influence our stakeholders to improve outcomes for the sector.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS	ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-21
Share our insights and experiences with industry, community groups and government to collaboratively improve the sector for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaged with government and regulators on policy issues and proposed legislation, with 12 submissions written and regular meetings with jurisdictional regulators • participated in national and international Ombudsman networks, including attendance by the Ombudsman at four ANZEWO meetings and six ANZOA member and executive meetings • team members attended ANZOA interest group meetings every quarter • published the annual report • 2% increase in website sessions, 18% increase in page views • 11 electronic newsletters published • published case studies on our website
Provide regular information to help our stakeholders and members understand the nature of issues that customers are experiencing and help them resolve these issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintained networks with scheme participants to proactively identify potential systemic issues • 80 systemic issue notices issued • systemic issues reports produced • trend analysis of data and current and emerging issues conducted as required to identify potential systemic issues • provided case data and trend analysis to scheme participants
Provide 95% of reporting and data requests to industry, government and regulators within agreed timeframes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided scheme participants regular reporting on scheme outcomes and performance within agreed timeframes • annual report delivered within three months of the end of financial year • four briefings prepared for Advisory Council • complaint statistics updated monthly on website and Queensland Government open data portal • case data reports provided to scheme participants with financial reconciliations • reports delivered to regulators as required • acknowledged media inquiries within 24 hours of receipt and responded to 100% within required timeframes • environmental scanning undertaken regularly and provided to team members to ensure their awareness of sector updates
Meet with communities across the state, connecting with them via various in-person and digital methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • team members attended 306 stakeholder events and 124 community outreach events • expanded our social media presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter by 10.6%, with 1,175 total followers and a total reach of 145,081
Increase awareness of our scheme and remove perceived barriers to entry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continued our reconciliation journey by progressing the actions of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan • published multimedia content on our website with a video explaining the complaints process

OUR PEOPLE

Commitment: Our people

We are committed problem solvers, working together to improve our service and ourselves. Our values guide our motivations and our outcomes.

- We attract, develop and retain committed professional people who are motivated by our values.
- We have an empowered, agile, high-performing and resilient team.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS	ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-21
Provide a safe and collaborative, yet challenging, environment to encourage and support our people to grow and develop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • values and achievement-based performance development plans for all team members created and reviewed annually • monthly one-on-one meetings undertaken focussing on performance, development and key learnings for each team member • delivered employee-led recognition and achievement program • tested and reviewed business continuity plans • supported team members' return to the office according to health advice about COVID-19 • 100% team members offered flexible working arrangements following COVID-19, with most continuing to telecommute two days per week
Embrace equality, diversity and inclusion, and understand that different perspectives are essential for a fair and balanced work environment and scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of recruitment practices to ensure they support equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights • progressed the actions of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, including increasing team members' understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country and conducted a review of our cultural learning needs within EWOQ • worked to foster an environment that supports and encourages learning and development • supported awareness-raising campaigns for equality, diversity and inclusion through internal communication channels • feedback provided through internal meetings and forums, and directly to the Ombudsman via a confidential email account
Invest in learning and developing our team, while balancing the demands of our business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5% of salaries budget allocated for training and development • focussed on social and action learning to develop our team through project work, higher duties and networking opportunities • continued to develop and deliver training to meet identified needs as per performance and development plans • completed succession planning for all roles within EWOQ • prioritised in-house online learning and onboarding throughout the year
Champion the agreed values and behaviours that each team member has committed to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • values and behaviours agreed in annual performance development and achievement plans • developed priority areas for action from our Working for Queensland survey results

Our connections

At a glance



One of our functions is to promote our services to those who may need our help. In 2020-21, we assisted customers across Queensland and delivered a variety of awareness raising initiatives and community outreach activities to build awareness of our services.

Our priorities this year have included connecting with consumers in regional areas and customers in financial difficulty, who we reach through our relationships with financial counsellors and community organisations.

We continued to foster relationships with First Nations communities through our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, with highlights including visits to Cherbourg and Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island).

We also maintained connections with key peer networks, including the Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA) and the Australian and New Zealand Energy and Water Ombudsman Network (ANZEWO).

Our members – or scheme participants – also help to promote the scheme to their customers. This year, we worked with them on outreach and information sessions and launched a member portal to streamline communication with them.

In detail



RAISING AWARENESS

During 2020-21, we connected with a range of community organisations throughout the state with a focus on information sessions for community workers, visits to community and neighbourhood centres, and attendance at interagency meetings in a number of regional communities, to spread the word about our services.

We also connected with consumers at financial literacy sessions, community expos and anti-poverty week events.

We fostered strong connections with community workers and financial counsellors by attending the Financial Counsellors' Association of Queensland (FCAQ) state conference and delivered webinars focused on supporting consumers facing financial difficulty because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stories about us featured in the *Courier Mail*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Morning Bulletin*, *Whitsunday Times*, *Toowoomba Chronicle*, *Sunshine Coast Daily* and *Council Leader*, a quarterly magazine published by the Local Government Association of Queensland.

This focus on awareness raising has resulted in an increase in the number of Queenslanders who are familiar with our service. In the latest Energy Consumers Australia sentiment survey released in June 2021, 33 per cent of Queensland respondents were familiar or very familiar with EWOQ, compared with 28 per cent in December 2020.

Supporting regional Queensland

During 2020-21, our team members travelled to Bundaberg, Cairns, Chinchilla, Dalby, Gympie, Hervey Bay, Kuranda, Mareeba, Maryborough, Murgon, Port Douglas, Roma, Townsville and Toowoomba, connecting with community workers and providing information to help customers understand their rights and responsibilities when making a complaint about an issue within our jurisdiction.

We hosted a Bring Your Bills day in Townsville, partnering with Ergon Energy Retail, Townsville Community Law Centre, Office of Fair Trading, Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network (ICAN) and Telstra.

First Nations outreach

Our First Nations outreach program aims to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people become confident and informed consumers, and ensure they are aware of their right to assistance with issues relating to their energy services, and water services for customers in South East Queensland.

During 2020-21, we continued to grow our connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support networks and visited community leaders from Cherbourg Regional Council and Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) to discuss energy issues facing their local communities.

Connecting online

We continue to promote our services online through our website and social media. These channels have become even more important since community outreach events were put on hold for a portion of the year in response to COVID-19.

Our social media reach has grown during 2020-21 from increased interaction with stakeholders and the community, informing Queenslanders about how we can help with their energy and water problems.

We presented as part of a series of webinars with the Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) and ICAN. These focused on energy hardship and concessions and finding the best energy deals.

We attended a virtual disability expo in September and took part in the online Dickson and Bonner seniors expos.

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

As a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service, we're passionate about creating equal opportunities for all, and a culture of respect and understanding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our reconciliation journey

Our relationship with First Nations people, organisations and communities is important to the success of the work that we do.

This year we continued to deliver the commitments of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), ensuring our work with and on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is collaborative. Our RAP working group actively tracks the progress of our Innovate RAP and monitors the implementation of actions.

Through our reconciliation journey, we are fostering professional and community partnerships to strengthen our connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders across Queensland.

We have also continued to use our sphere of influence within the wider community to engage, encourage and promote partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.

Continuing the conversation

During 2020-21, our team members celebrated NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week. For National Reconciliation Week 2021, we launched our new First Nations polo shirt and scarf, and our team members pledged their commitment to reconciliation. We also talked about reconciliation and what our RAP means to us.

We have continued to look for opportunities to develop cultural competency and capacity across the team. We have recruited two First Nations team members this year, including a community outreach officer and a trainee in our Assessment, Investigation and Resolution team.

Our connections

We have maintained strong productive working relationships with peak and representative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations throughout Queensland, including the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network (ICAN).

By meeting to discuss common issues and working collaboratively, we gain a greater understanding of energy and water issues experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities and how we can help.

Our community outreach program has continued to strengthen and grow our networks and partnerships to provide a service with manners, respect and courtesy by observing cultural protocols.

We reviewed our procurement strategy to encourage increased use of First Nations suppliers and to ensure there are no barriers for these suppliers and providers to participate.

Key data

HOW MANY FIRST NATIONS CONSUMERS CONTACT US?

198 cases closed

for customers identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This represents 4.2 per cent of the cases closed in 2020-21 where identification information was recorded.

Complaints..... 159

Billing..... 51%

Credit..... 21%

By comparison, for complaints where the customer did not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, 59 per cent were about billing and 9 per cent about credit in 2020-21.

Billing = high or disputed bills, metering faults, billing errors, rebates and concessions.

Credit = payment difficulties, hardship and disconnections.

PEER NETWORKS

We maintain strong links with the Australian dispute resolution community as a member of the Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA) and the Australian and New Zealand Energy and Water Ombudsman Network (ANZEWON). We are also actively involved in cross-sector collaboration through the Thriving Communities Partnership.

ANZOA

Committed to high standards of independence, impartiality and effectiveness, ANZOA members observe the six benchmarks for industry-based customer dispute resolution: accessibility, independence, fairness, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

In addition to regular informal contact with other Ombudsman offices, the Ombudsman attended six ANZOA meetings throughout the year, including four ANZOA executive meetings.

Our team members are actively involved in ANZOA's eight interest groups, including:

- complaints management
- corporate
- data and analytics
- indigenous engagement
- people and development
- public relations and communications (facilitated by EWOQ)
- systemic issues and policy influence
- vulnerable consumers.

EWOQ led an initiative to produce ANZOA member services maps for each Australian state and territory and for New Zealand. The maps provide consumers, financial counsellors and community organisations with an overview of the Ombudsman services in their region as well as relevant national services. The services maps have been very well received by consumers and consumer support services such as the financial counsellor network across Australia.

ANZEWON

ANZEWON is a network of energy and water ombudsmen and utilities complaints commissioners from across Australia and New Zealand. They work together to explore and address industry and policy developments that affect Australian and New Zealand consumers.

The network supports collaboration and learning to avoid duplication of effort which ensures members can progress projects with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The Ombudsman attended four ANZEWON meetings throughout the year. The February 2021 meeting was also attended by the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) and the Australian Energy Regulator (AER).

Thriving Communities Partnership

The Thriving Communities Partnership is a cross-sector collaboration with the goal that everybody has fair access to the modern essential services they need to thrive in contemporary Australia, including utilities, financial services, telecommunications and transport.

Our Ombudsman Jane Pires is currently the Chair of the Queensland chapter, which has focused on a disaster planning and recovery collaborative research project and developing solutions based on this research over the past 12 months. This has helped us connect with different community organisations and to understand more ways we can assist when a community has been involved in a natural disaster.

OUR CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC POLICY

We contribute to relevant policy and legislative reviews undertaken by government, regulators, not-for-profit organisations and other bodies. We draw on our insights and experiences with customers and suppliers to make submissions on a variety of issues relevant to energy and water consumers.

Australian Energy Market Commission

- maintaining life support registration when a customer switches providers
- bill contents and billing requirements
- review of the metering regulatory framework.

Australian Energy Regulator

- compliance and enforcement priorities for 2021-22
- key research questions that will assist in the development of the Better Bills Guideline.

We also made submissions to:

- **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission** on the consumer data right proposed for the energy sector
- **Energy Security Board** on the proposed data strategy for the energy sector
- **Department of Premier and Cabinet and Federal Treasury** on the review of statutory bodies, including EWOQ's scheme
- **Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Energy Council** on changes to the Civil Penalty provisions under the National Energy Laws.

OUR MEMBERS

During 2020-21, we welcomed eight new scheme participants, bringing the total membership of EWOQ to 55 scheme participants.

EWOQ is predominantly funded by scheme participants through participation fees and user-pays fees.

Scheme participants pay an annual participation fee in July (or part-fee if they become a scheme participant during the financial year).

In October, EWOQ hosted a webinar series called *Supporting energy consumers financially impacted by COVID-19*, which brought scheme participants AGL, Alinta Energy, Energex, Energy Australia, Ergon Energy Retail, Origin Energy and Red Energy together with financial counsellors and community organisations.

The webinars – one focused on South East Queensland and the other for regional Queensland – provided members with the opportunity to discuss their approach to customer support during the COVID-19 pandemic with financial counsellors and community organisations.

Member feedback

In March, we conducted our annual scheme participant satisfaction survey. Survey questions were divided into four sections: dispute resolution benchmarks, interaction with EWOQ, dispute resolution processes, and satisfaction with EWOQ as a scheme.

All our dispute resolution benchmark satisfaction scores – rating our accessibility, fairness, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, and independence – ranged between 85 and 90 per cent.

The satisfaction with our dispute resolution processes rated between 84 and 89 per cent. Overall satisfaction with our scheme was 85 per cent (up from 77 per cent in 2019).

Member portal launch

In May 2021, we launched our member portal to streamline communication with our members. The portal allows scheme participants to update their own team's contact details and view static reports about their cases.

Development of the portal continues, with further reporting and communications functions planned in the future.

See Appendix 7 for a list of scheme participants.

Learn more



Read our submissions

Scan this code to read EWOQ's submissions



For more information

www.ewoq.com.au/members

www.ewoq.com.au/submissions

Related reading

Our customers – see page 16

Appendix 7 – Scheme participants – see page 89

Our governance

At a glance



Our governance framework outlines how we manage our business, minimise our risks, and meet our legislative obligations.

Our systems are based on strong ethical foundations and our commitment to fairness, accountability and transparency.

The following committees oversee our governance:

- Executive management group
- Advisory Council
- Audit and risk management committee
- Information steering committee
- Workplace health and safety committee.

Risk management is a key governance principle and forms an integral part of the everyday activities of EWOQ.

In detail



GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

EWOQ's governance framework underpins our strategies, policies, procedures, processes, and resources that provide ongoing confidence in the integrity of our services. These elements have been mapped against the following **six governance principles** to ensure our practices are rigorous and robust.

	LEADERSHIP	Shared understanding of purpose and priorities through effective planning, collaboration, communication and resource allocation.
	ACCOUNTABILITY	Clear accountabilities, understanding our roles and responsibilities to meet corporate expectations and legislative requirements.
	PERFORMANCE	Monitoring and reporting on our performance to meet expectations.
	RISK MANAGEMENT	Regularly assessing and responding to risks and opportunities.
	IMPROVEMENT	Actively enhancing our performance across all aspects of our business.
	SERVICE DELIVERY	Customer and scheme participant focused service delivery, stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

In 2020-21, our executive management group members were:

Jane Pires. Energy and Water Ombudsman

Jane Pires was appointed Energy and Water Ombudsman in December 2016 and has more than 30 years experience in customer service and complaint management, including extensive senior executive experience in dispute resolution, mediation and conciliation.

As Energy and Water Ombudsman, Jane is committed to providing all Queenslanders with access to a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service, contributing to improved service delivery in the energy and water sectors, and fostering a culture of excellence within the team.

Jane chairs the Standards Australia QR-015 (Complaints handling) committee responsible for reviewing 'AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations' and also the Queensland chapter of the Thriving Communities Partnership.

She is also the Australian representative on the committee for international standard 'ISO 10002:2018 Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations'. Jane also served on the board of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals Australia (SOCAP) for 10 years, including three years as President and five years as Vice President.

John Jones. General Manager

– Assessment, Investigation and Resolution

John Jones leads the complaint investigation and dispute resolution functions of the office, providing a timely, effective and independent way of resolving disputes.

His wealth of experience in dispute resolution makes him a valued representative of EWOQ at forums with state and national jurisdictional regulators, and industry and consumer representatives.

Sonia Cahill. Manager

– Communications and Engagement

Sonia Cahill leads the communications and engagement team and is responsible for raising awareness of the scheme through a range of communication initiatives and community outreach activities.

She has expertise in corporate communications, media relations, and website and social media management in both the public and private sectors in Australia and abroad.

Eleanor Bray. General Manager

– Strategy, Operations and Governance

Eleanor Bray leads the strategy, operations and governance team. She supports our business by providing corporate services including finance, risk and compliance, IT, policy and research, and performance reporting to the broader team.

Her experience and drive ensures our business is customer centric, forward-focused and conducted efficiently and effectively within our resource limitations.

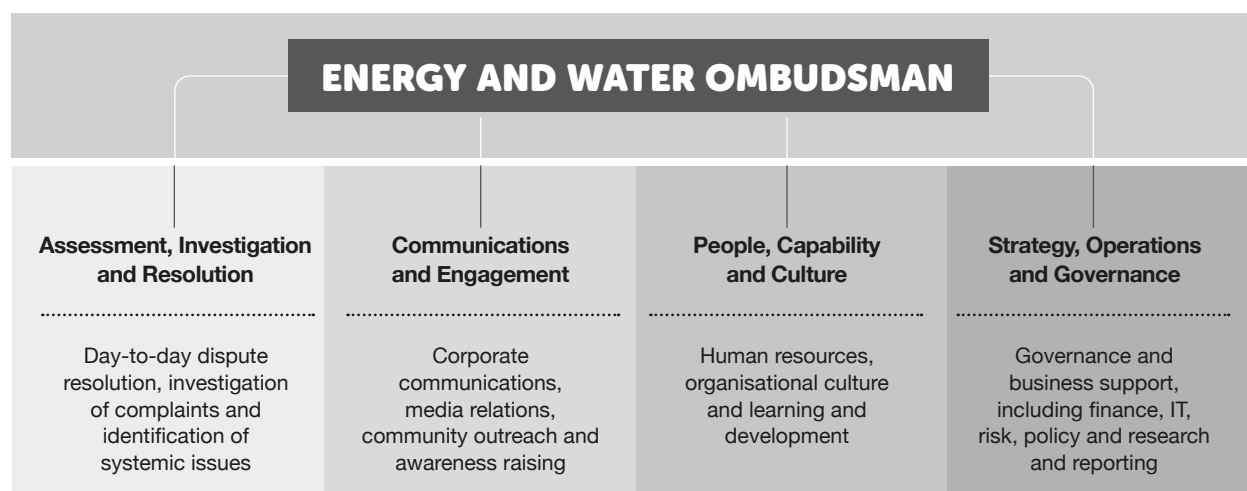
Leonie Jones. Manager

– People, Capability and Culture

Leonie Jones leads the people, capability and culture team, managing and implementing a range of strategic human resources, organisational culture and development initiatives that support EWOQ's strategic objectives.

With more than 25 years' experience within the public sector, Leonie brings with her a depth of management and HR experience.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE ENERGY AND WATER OMBUDSMAN

The Advisory Council monitors the independence of the Energy and Water Ombudsman scheme and provides advice to the Energy and Water Ombudsman and the Ministers responsible for energy and water on policy, procedural and operational issues relating to the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*. This helps to ensure the scheme is fair and effective for consumers and suppliers.

Advisory Council membership

The Advisory Council meets every quarter and includes an independent chair and at least six other members appointed by the Ministers on the Chair's recommendation and after consultation with scheme participants, consumer groups and community organisations.

There must be an equal number of other members representing industry and consumer interests. Under the Act, at least two of the industry members must represent the interests of energy retailers, at least one must represent the interests of energy distributors, and at least one must represent the interests of the water entities.

The Chair may hold office for up to five years, however, there is no restriction on the length of terms of ordinary members. On appointment to the Advisory Council, members receive an induction to help them understand the scheme and how the office operates. Council members represent the interests of the sector and must act in the best interests of the scheme when exercising their council responsibilities.

Roles and responsibilities of council members

The EWOQ Advisory Council Handbook details the roles and responsibilities of council members, while the Advisory Council Code of Conduct helps council members discharge their responsibilities under the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*. While not a prescriptive code, it contains the ethics, principles and values which council members have agreed to put into practice.

Council members are entitled to meeting fees approved by the Governor-in-Council, and reimbursement of reasonable costs incurred for attending council meetings, based on the Remuneration Procedures for Part-time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Boards.

Learn more



For more information

www.ewoq.com.au/advisory-council

Related reading

Message from the Advisory Council Chair – see page 8

2020-21 membership – see page 9

Appendix five – Advisory Council – see page 86

AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The committee provides independent comment, advice and counsel to assist the Ombudsman's oversight of the:

- integrity of EWOQ's financial statements and internal controls
- compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements
- process relating to internal risk management and control systems
- performance of the internal audit function.

Read more about the audit and risk management committee's work during 2020-21 on page 31.

INFORMATION STEERING COMMITTEE

The information steering committee is responsible for issues associated with information technology, information management and information security projects, and to ensure the efficient, effective and equitable use of current and future information communication technology (ICT) resources.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The purpose of this committee is to act as a forum for health, safety and wellbeing consultative processes, lead the direction for managing health, safety and wellbeing issues, and address operational matters where appropriate.

CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

At EWOQ, we are required to make ethical decisions, be accountable for our actions, and demonstrate integrity. We are committed to fostering a positive organisational culture that values and promotes ethical leadership and decision making.

All employees are required to observe the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service. The principles and values in the code are incorporated into our policies and procedures as well as individual performance plans.

All new team members undertake ethics and code of conduct training during their induction.

Refresher training for code of conduct is provided annually. Mandated training in fraud control and corruption prevention was completed by all team members during 2020-21, along with a tailored online program about bullying and harassment.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Queensland's *Human Rights Act 2019* recognises 23 categories of human rights and acknowledges the responsibility of public sector employees to respect, protect and promote the human rights of all individuals.

EWOQ is committed to acting in a way that is compatible with our human rights obligations when we promote our services and interact with the community.

The Human Rights Act requires Queensland's public agencies, including EWOQ, to act or make decisions that are compatible with these rights.

Section 97 of this Act also requires that we publish details of any:

- human rights actions taken during the reporting period
- human rights complaints received, including:
 - the number of complaints received
 - the outcome of the complaints
 - any other information prescribed by regulation relating to complaints
- review of policies, programs, procedures, practices or services undertaken in relation to our compatibility with human rights.

During 2020-21, EWOQ made it a requirement that all reviews of EWOQ policies, procedures and plans must assess whether the documents promote and are compatible with human rights.

A number of key EWOQ documents have since been reviewed for compatibility with human rights and all prospective document reviews will be reviewed against this criteria.

EWOQ received no human rights complaints between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Risk management is an integral part of strategic and business planning, and the everyday activities of EWOQ.

In accordance with section 23 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*, EWOQ is committed to implementing risk management strategies that ensure efficiency and effectiveness in meeting our objectives, while also providing a safe and healthy workplace for our team.

Audit and risk management committee

Members of the Audit and risk management committee (ARMC) are appointed by the Energy and Water Ombudsman.

External members of the committee are Queensland public sector employees and do not receive additional remuneration in relation to this committee, as per the Remuneration Procedures for Part-time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Boards.

Committee members during 2020-21:

- Gavin Holdway, Chair (from 4 February 2021)
- Irene Sitton, Chair (to 3 February 2021)
- Brydie Bodnar, external member (from 4 February 2021)
- Fiona Trenear, external member (to 3 February 2021)
- Eleanor Bray, internal member.

ARMC observes the terms of its Audit and Risk Management Committee Charter and has due regard for the *Audit Committee guidelines: Improving accountability and performance* issued by Queensland Treasury.

During 2020-21, the committee met four times and invited both external and internal audit representatives to regularly attend meetings.

Key achievements for 2020-21

- Endorsed the financial statements 2019-20 and considered all audit recommendations by external audit.
- Endorsed the strategic and annual internal audit plan for approval by the Energy and Water Ombudsman.
- Monitored progress of the annual internal audit plan and outcomes from audits undertaken.
- Reviewed the risk management framework and policy, including business continuity plan.
- Reviewed the new governance framework.
- Provided oversight on the ongoing risk management activities within the organisation including COVID-19 risks to the business and cyber-security risks.

Internal audit

Our internal audit function is undertaken by the Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) and managed through a service level agreement.

The internal audit workplan is directed through a strategic and annual plan developed in consultation with the ARMC and approved by the Ombudsman, which has due regard for professional standards and the *Audit Committee guidelines: Improving accountability and performance* issued by Queensland Treasury.

Internal audit activities can include financial, compliance and operational reviews; information system and data integrity reviews; and special review assignments as requested by management.

This team reports to the ARMC and operates independently of our management and our external audit function.

Key achievements for 2020-21

Provided reports to the ARMC and the Ombudsman on the results of internal audits undertaken, as well as monitored and reported on the implementation of recommendations for the following:

- recruitment
- business continuity
- risk management
- financial management practice manual.

Business continuity management

Our external service provider CAA maintains a business continuity plan which provides for the recovery and/or continuity of our information technology, human resources and finance functions.

We have a comprehensive business continuity plan which was activated periodically during 2020-21 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our team has returned to working from the office at least three days a week as part of flexible working arrangements. The health and safety of our team while working from the office continues to be closely monitored and is supported through hygiene and physical distancing practices.

Our team can successfully conduct our entire operations remotely at short notice, if required.

Information systems and record keeping

As a public service office, we are required by legislation and government standards to keep and maintain proper records of our activities.

We are committed to meeting our governance responsibilities under the relevant Acts, applicable legislation, Queensland Government's Information Standards, Queensland State Archives Standards and best practice methods outlined in applicable International Standards.

We have an electronic document records management system (EDRMS) and have appointed an information management officer to oversee records governance. The security of the EDRMS is managed in accordance with our Information Security management system.

Information security attestation

During the mandatory annual Information Security reporting process, the Energy and Water Ombudsman attested to the appropriateness of the information security risk management within EWOQ to the Queensland Government Chief Information Security Officer, noting that appropriate assurance activities have been undertaken to inform this opinion and the organisation's information security risk position.

Right to information and protection of personal information

We are committed to providing the community with open and transparent access to information about our services and activities. Consistent with the *Right to Information Act 2009* and *Information Privacy Act 2009*, we proactively release information held by our office unless, on balance, it is contrary to the public interest to provide the information.

All requests for information received during 2020-21 have been released under the Administrative Access Scheme. We also participated in the Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland (OIC) Privacy Awareness Week and contributed to the s185 annual report.

External dispute resolution scheme

Since 2015-16, we have been recognised as an external dispute resolution scheme by the Office of the Australian Information Commission (OAIC) under the *Privacy Act 1988*. We are required to report on serious or repeated interference with privacy or systemic privacy issues relating to these bodies to the OAIC every quarter.

We are also required to provide OAIC with an annual report including a range of data relating to complaints investigated under this jurisdiction.

Mandatory online reporting

We publish the following datasets on the Queensland Government open data website (www.data.qld.gov.au):

- consultancy spending
- language services expenditure.

An overseas travel expenditure report for the 2020-21 reporting year was not required due to overseas travel not being undertaken by any EWOQ team members.

Learn more



Governance framework

Scan this code to view our Governance Framework.



For more information

www.ewoq.com.au/who-we-are
www.ewoq.com.au/human-rights
www.data.qld.gov.au

Related reading

Message from the Advisory Council Chair – see page 8
 Our performance – see page 20

Our people

WORKFORCE PROFILE

At a glance

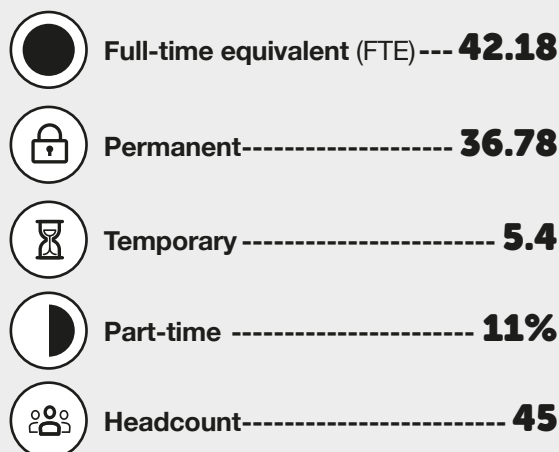


As at 30 June 2021, 45 officers were employed on a full or part-time basis. We have embraced flexible working arrangements with all team members benefitting from the flexibility provided through telecommuting, with the majority working at least three days per week in the office.

Leadership development and strategic workforce planning, specifically succession planning and talent management, has been a focus of 2020-21, with the leadership team taking part in a coaching program. We continue to prioritise learning with a focus on current and future requirements and have started the initial work on establishing a digital capability framework, recognising the ongoing growth of technology and automation in the workplace.

A review of our recruitment and selection strategies and enhancements to our onboarding processes have ensured we have been well placed to continue to attract, recruit and retain an inclusive, diverse and capable workforce during the challenges currently faced with COVID-19.

Key data



	Females	Males
AO3-AO4	6	1
AO5-AO7	21	8
AO8-CEO	6	3
Total	33	12

Our retention rate was 93 per cent, with three permanent separations during 2020-21.

No redundancy, early retirement or retrenchment packages were paid during the period.

5 team members (11%) work part-time.

OUR PEOPLE

In detail



FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

EWOQ has embraced and promotes the Public Service Commission's flexible by design framework. Our team members access a range of flexible work arrangements, including:

- telecommuting
- transitioning to retirement
- flexible start and finish times
- alternative place of work
- part-time arrangements.

We are committed to an agile and flexible workforce, and our flexible working arrangements help support the wellbeing, productivity and performance of employees. These qualities are key to creating an innovative and diverse workforce, capable of responsive service delivery.

All team members are benefitting from the flexibility available through telecommuting, with the majority working at least three days per week in the office.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Leadership development continued to be a focus during 2020-21, with the leadership team undertaking a coaching program created to enhance these skills and embed a coaching culture within work groups. This work will continue during the next financial year.

Succession planning and talent management across EWOQ has helped to identify high-performing emerging leaders and development plans are underway to support their learning.

Members of our Assessment, Investigation and Resolution (AIR) leadership team took part in a strategy planning workshop early in 2021 to prioritise their program of works and our executive management group has developed a work design identifying our strategic priorities through to 2023. Measures of success have been identified across these initiatives to report on and assess the completion of these actions.

Work also involved examining our employee opinion survey results, determining priority actions and engaging with team members to seek further understanding and develop improvement strategies.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

As part of our commitment to fairness and transparency, we established the EWOQ consultative committee with Together Union to facilitate consultation around matters such as workload management, organisational change and restructuring, training and work/life balance.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to developing our people to ensure our services are delivered efficiently and effectively. All team members are encouraged to develop their skills and knowledge through on-the-job training and self-directed learning.

During 2020-21, the impacts of working from home then returning to the office provided new challenges to our team's learning and development needs and our delivery methods. We provided technical, compliance, role-specific and professional development activities on a range of topics, including:

- coaching and mentoring for our leadership team
- customer service and customer experience
- business process mapping
- managing virtual teams and COVID-related compliance.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

In 2020-21, we continued to improve our performance management framework for all employees, ensuring the completion of monthly one-on-one meetings and the availability of the performance and development plan online. Following its launch, all employees attended training and our performance development completion rate is 100 per cent.

Our performance management framework provides our employees with the opportunity to fulfil their potential through an understanding of expectations, a focus on continuous improvement and feedback and their development for current and future needs. Through this, we are able to deliver the best possible outcomes for our customers, community and stakeholders. The framework aims to develop personal leadership, vision, innovation, goals and achievements that support our strategic plan and business plans.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

EWOQ is committed to diversity of thought, experience, perspective and gender. Some of our initiatives include unconscious bias, diversity and inclusion training.

In 2020-21, we improved our capability in diversity and inclusion by:

- introducing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeship based in our Cairns office
- appointing a community outreach officer
- reviewing our human resource policies and practices to support and demonstrate EWOQ's commitment to human rights and a diverse and inclusive workplace
- providing team members with access to an Employee Assistance Program with specialist support for minority groups
- reinforcing our procurement processes to promote inclusive partnership opportunities
- committing to our second Reconciliation Action Plan – Innovate RAP 2020-21 – which includes community outreach to strengthen and grow our networks and partnerships within the communities we serve to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We are proud of our results in the Working for Queensland employee opinion survey, which indicated an 87 per cent positive response to the anti-discrimination factor, a result 21 centiles higher than the Queensland public sector overall rate. We will continue to strive to improve on this measure.

66 *My case officer was very courteous and understanding. They were prepared to listen to my side and explained the process fully. They also contacted me when necessary.*

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

The mental and physical wellbeing of our team is of the utmost importance at EWOQ. In 2021, team members have undertaken mentally healthy workplace training to promote and support positive mental health, with many employees now accredited as Mental Health First Aiders following this specific training.

Our workplace health and safety committee meet every three months and continue to focus on specific initiatives, including:

- continuing our wellness program, ensuring employees have access to flu vaccinations, nutritional information, wellbeing seminars, domestic and family violence programs, and corporate memberships for health insurance and fitness centres
- a number of our team members completed training to increase our awareness of domestic and family violence issues to support our customers and work colleagues.

The committee also reviewed workplace health and safety policies and procedures to support legislative compliance.

EMPLOYEE ACHIEVEMENT AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM

During 2020-21, we recognised and celebrated the achievements of our team members with an employee achievement and recognition program called the EWOQ All Stars.

An initiative of the celebration of success working group, the awards cover several categories and timeframes:

- All Star Award – a bi-annual award recognising a team member for their overall contribution, ongoing commitment and demonstration of our values
- Bright Star Award – a quarterly award for innovation, leadership, enthusiasm and problem solving
- Rising Star Award – a quarterly award for improvement and development of ideas and actions.

There are also two informal awards: the Shining Star Award, for going above and beyond; and the Rock Star Award, which celebrates team members making a difference, paying it forward or simply making the team laugh.

The working group also reviewed the program in preparation for its relaunch next financial year.

Our cases

The figures and the issues

At a glance

During 2020-21, the top three primary issues customers contacted us about were billing, credit and provision, which was consistent with 2019-20.

Billing remains the most common issue that customers contact us about, accounting for 58 per cent of the complaints we closed in 2020-21.

Credit-related issues such as payment difficulties or disconnection accounted for 11 per cent, and provision 10 per cent of the complaints we closed.

In detail

OUR CASES

The total number of **complaints** closed in 2020-21 decreased by 22 per cent from 2019-20. This was largely driven by a drop in the number of credit cases. We received 518 complaints related to credit issues, such as payment difficulties, collections and disconnection, during 2020-21, compared to 1,075 in 2019-20.

This reduction can be attributed to the Australian Energy Regulator's Statement of Expectations outlining the additional assistance that retailers should offer to customers experiencing financial stress. These included deferred debt arrangements, payment plans and a hold on disconnections and referral to debt collection.

These measures applied to customers who contacted their retailer to let them know they were having trouble paying their bills.

There were **181 complaints related to COVID-19** during 2020-21, which represents four per cent of total complaints closed.

Another complaint trend of interest is the number of Level 3 investigations (the most complex investigations), which increased by 16 per cent this year.

Level 3 investigations are the most complex type of complaint we manage and can take many hours, across a number of weeks to resolve.

The Level 3 investigations closed in 2020-21 took an average of 10.7 hours to resolve, with the longest being 24.6 hours.

In 2020-21, we closed a total of 1,237 investigations (down from 1,897 in 2019-20) with 428 closed as Level 2 investigations and 104 closed as Level 3 investigations. This compares to 475 Level 2 investigations and 90 Level 3 investigations closed in 2019-20.




Learn more

Related reading

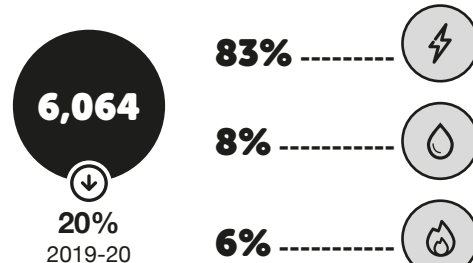
Our service – see page 10

Key data

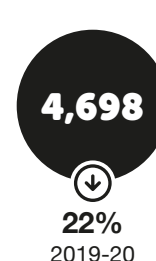
Top three issues

1. Billing 
2. Credit 
3. Provision 

Total cases¹



Total complaints²



¹A Case any contact a customer has with EWOQ, including general enquiry, refer back to supplier, referral to higher level, investigation, or referral to another organisation.

Some cases are not classified as electricity, water or gas.

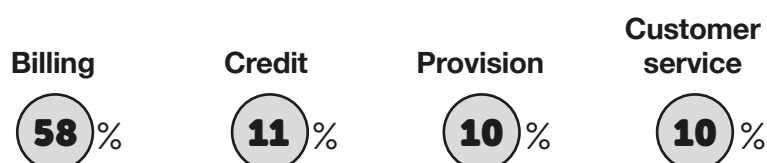
²Complaints these are cases that are billed to a scheme participant i.e. refer back to supplier, referral to higher level and investigations.

Table 1: Closed complaints by primary issue

Primary issue	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Billing	3,326	4,071	3,232	3,109	2,714
Credit	1,265	1,311	1,130	1,075	518
Provision	380	882	732	655	481
Customer service	502	735	639	536	454
Supply	161	183	151	154	154
Transfer	173	466	344	199	138
Land	46	59	86	89	107
Marketing	20	58	52	49	38
Other	147	166	142	121	94
Total complaints	6,020	7,931	6,508	5,987	4,698

OUR CASES

Top four closed complaints for 2020-21



Electricity

ELECTRICITY COMPLAINTS

At a glance

There were 4,154 electricity complaints closed in 2020-21, which was 1,216 fewer than last year. Refer backs were the most common electricity case type (37 per cent of complaints) in 2020-21, followed by referral to higher level (37 per cent) and investigations (26 per cent).

Billing was the most common primary issue (57 per cent of complaints closed).

Credit complaints fell to 11 per cent of complaints closed in 2020-21 from 19 per cent of complaints closed in 2019-20.

Key data

During 2020-21

4,154

electricity complaints closed

3,708 complaints about retailers and related entities

446 complaints about distributors

Closed electricity complaints by case type

Refer back

37%

Referral to higher level

37%

26%

Investigation

Electricity complaints by primary issue

- Billing **57%**
- Credit **11%**
- Provision **10%**
- Customer service **10%**

OUR CASES

Table 2: Closed electricity complaints by primary issue and case type

Primary issue	Refer back	Referral to higher level	Investigation	Total
Billing	801	903	667	2,371
Credit	228	108	138	474
Provision	146	178	104	428
Customer service	142	191	85	418
Supply	66	31	40	137
Transfer	44	62	27	133
Land	32	33	13	78
Marketing	20	14	3	37
Other	78	0	0	78
Total	1,557	1,520	1,077	4,154

ELECTRICITY RETAILER AND DISTRIBUTOR PERFORMANCE

Table 3: Electricity retailer and distributor performance

Provider ¹	Electricity customer numbers ²	Complaints closed per 10,000 customers	Complaints closed 2020-21	Complaints closed 2019-20	% Variance
First tier retailer³					
Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	500,001 - 1,000,000	20	1,268	1,765	-28%
Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd	500,001 - 1,000,000	5	376	705	-47%
AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	100,001 - 500,000	19	695	805	-14%
Second tier retailer					
EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	100,001 - 500,000	24	264	379	-30%
Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd	100,001 - 500,000	23	481	627	-23%
Simply Energy	10,001 - 100,000	59	92	103	-11%
ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	41	41	<20	-
Click Energy Pty Ltd ⁴	10,001 - 100,000	28	100	176	-43%
Powerdirect Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	26	35	42	-17%
Powershop Australia Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	16	22	33	-33%
Red Energy Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	15	75	89	-16%
Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	8	27	24	13%
1st Energy Pty Ltd	3,001 - 10,000	79	27	39	-31%
Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	3,001 - 10,000	62	58	49	18%
QEnergy Limited	3,001 - 10,000	54	32	30	7%
Distributor					
Energex Ltd	> 1,000,000	2	265	252	5%
Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	500,001 - 1,000,000	2	179	169	6%

¹ Only providers with more than 20 complaints have been included in this table

² Customer numbers sourced from AER Retail energy market performance update for Quarter 3, 2020-21 (retailers) and AER Regulatory Information Notice (RIN) responses 2019-20 (distributors)

³ First tier retailers are defined by the AER as those who hold more than a 10 per cent market share in Queensland.

⁴ Click Energy Pty Ltd includes amaysim Energy Pty Ltd and Click Energy data

ELECTRICITY PROVIDERS AND RELATED ENTITIES WITH LESS THAN 20 COMPLAINTS

- Blue NRG Pty Ltd
- Bright Spark Power Pty Ltd
- CovaU Pty Ltd
- Diamond Energy Pty Ltd
- Discover Energy Pty Ltd
- Elysian Energy Pty Ltd
- Energy Locals Pty Ltd
- Energy Services Management (trading as Glow Power)
- Enova Energy Pty Ltd
- Essential Energy
- Globird Energy Pty Ltd
- Hanwha Energy Retail Australia Pty Ltd (trading as Nectr)
- Lumo Energy (Qld) Pty Ltd
- Metered Energy Holdings Pty Ltd
- Mojo Power Pty Ltd
- Momentum Energy Pty Ltd
- Next Business Energy Pty Ltd
- Online Power and Gas Pty Ltd (trading as Future X Power)
- OVO Energy Pty Ltd
- People Energy Pty Ltd
- Power Club Ltd
- Powershop Australia Pty Ltd – Kogan
- Radian Holdings Pty Ltd
- Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd
- Shell Energy Retail Pty Ltd (formerly ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd)
- Social Energy Australia Pty Ltd
- Sumo Power Pty Ltd

Learn more



For all data about:

- Electricity investigations by primary and secondary issue
- Electricity retailer complaints
- Electricity distributor complaints

See Appendix 2 – Electricity data from page 74.

Related reading

Appendix 7: Scheme participants – see page 89

Gas

GAS COMPLAINTS

At a glance



This year, we closed 194 gas complaints, including 43 investigations. Refer backs were the most common gas complaint type (49 per cent of complaints), while billing was the most common primary issue (54 per cent of complaints closed).

Learn more



For all data about:

- Closed gas retailer complaints by primary issue
 - Closed gas distributor complaints by primary issue
- See Appendix 3 – Gas data from page 82.

Key data



During 2020-21

194

gas
complaints
closed

Closed gas complaints by
case type

Refer back

Referral to
higher level

22%

Investigation

Gas complaints by
primary issue

- Billing 54%
- Provision 15%
- Credit 14%

OUR CASES

Table 4: Closed gas complaints by primary issue and case type

Primary issue	Refer back	Referral to higher level	Investigation	Total
Billing	40	37	27	104
Provision	21	7	2	30
Credit	14	6	8	28
Customer service	6	4	3	13
Supply	7	0	0	7
Transfer	1	1	3	5
Land	1	0	0	1
Marketing	1	0	0	1
Other	5	0	0	5
Total	96	55	43	194

Water

At a glance



There was a 10 per cent increase in water complaints overall in 2020-21, consisting of 22 per cent increase in refer backs, 18 per cent increase in investigations, and 19 per cent decrease in referral to higher level.

Learn more



For all data about:

- Closed water retailer complaints by primary issue
- Closed water distributor complaints by primary issue

See Appendix 4 – Water data from page 84.

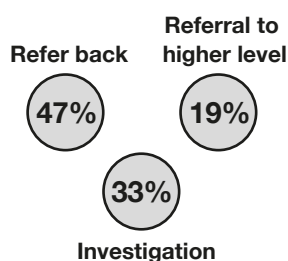
Key data



During 2020-21

350 water complaints closed

Closed water complaints by case type



Water complaints by primary issue

- Billing 68%
- Land 8%
- Customer service 7%
- Provision 7%
- Credit 5%

OUR CASES

Table 5: Closed water complaints by primary issue and case type

Primary issue	Refer back	Referral to higher level	Investigation	Total
Billing	113	36	90	239
Land	12	8	8	28
Customer service	6	11	6	23
Provision	10	7	6	23
Credit	10	3	3	16
Supply	4	2	4	10
Other	11	0	0	11
Total	166	67	117	350

Financial Summary

The Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman had a strong focus on financial management throughout 2020-21 enabling us to plan and deliver our objectives.

In 2020-21, our financial position was impacted by COVID-19 with an overall reduction in case numbers leading to a reduction in revenue and expenses against the forecasted budget.

The risk management and control systems relating to financial management have been operating efficiently, effectively and economically throughout the financial year.

PROJECTS

As part of our commitment to improve business processes and customer service delivery, approximately \$600,000 of special funding contributions received in 2019-20 was carried over to complete special projects 2020-21.

REVENUE

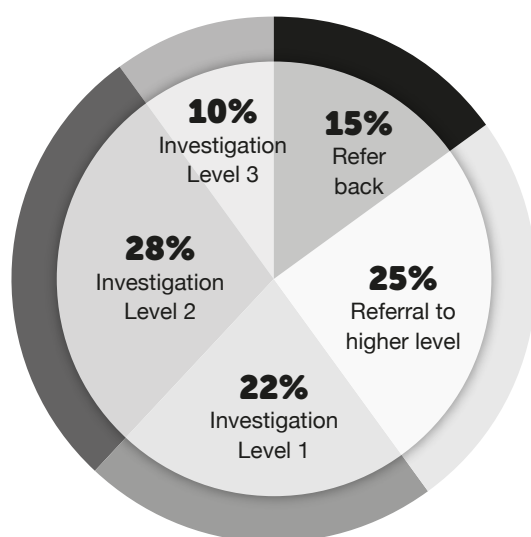
(excluding special projects)

We are predominantly funded by scheme participants – the energy and water retailers and distributors operating in Queensland – who are required to pay an annual participation fee and user pays fees.

Our income for 2020-21 was \$7.5 million (up from \$7.3 million in 2019-20) and included:

- \$7.2 million user pays fees
- \$305,463 participation fees
- \$28,393 other revenue.

User pays fee breakdown 2020-21



EXPENSES

(excluding special projects)

Our expenses in 2020-21 were \$7.5 million (up from \$7.3 million in 2019-20). Employee expenses accounted for 72 per cent of this, with supplies and services accounting for a further 26 per cent. Depreciation, audit fees, and costs associated with our Advisory Council made up the balance of our total expenditure.

ASSETS

At 30 June 2021, the Office's assets totalled \$4.4 million, which was comprised of:

- cash and cash equivalents
- receivables
- prepayments
- plant and equipment
- intangible assets.

LIABILITIES

As at 30 June 2021, our liabilities totalled \$3.7 million, which included:

- \$1.9 million in unearned revenue
- \$1.3 million in accounts payable
- \$534,857 in employee entitlements.

Financial statements

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
(trading as Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland)
for the financial year ended 30 June 2021**

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Financial Statements

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Changes in Equity

Statement of Cash Flows

Note 1 Basis of Financial Statement Preparation

Our Financial Performance

Note 2 Scheme Fees

Note 3 Other Revenue

Note 4 Employee Expenses

Note 5 Supplies and Services

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Our Financial Position

Note 8 Cash and Cash Equivalents

Note 9 Receivables

Note 10 Plant and Equipment and Depreciation Expense

Note 11 Intangibles and amortisation expense

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Note 16 Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures

Note 17 Related Party Transactions

Note 19 Contingencies

Note 20 Events Occurring after Balance Date

Certification

Management Certificate

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Statement of Comprehensive Income
for the year ended 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$'000	Restated 2020 \$'000
Operating Result			
Income from Operations			
Scheme fees	2.	7,457	7,272
Other revenue	3.	33	48
Total Income from Operations		7,490	7,320
Expenses from Operations			
Employee expenses	4.	5,423	5,373
Supplies and services	5.	1,961	1,913
Depreciation	10.	12	1
Amortisation		60	
Other expenses	6.	29	33
Total Expenses from Operations		7,486	7,320
Operating result for the year		4	
Net surplus – Special projects	7.	59	347
Total Comprehensive Income		63	347

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Changes have been made to the comparative information for 2019-2020. See Note 1 – Early Adoption of Accounting Standards and Interpretations.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Statement of Financial Position
as at 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$'000	Restated 2020 \$'000
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	8.	3,639	3,918
Receivables	9.	230	365
Prepayments		149	130
Total Current Assets		4,018	4,413
Non-Current Assets			
Plant and equipment	10.	53	32
Intangible assets	11.	314	316
Total Non-Current Assets		367	348
Total Assets		4,385	4,761
Current Liabilities			
Payables	12.	1,282	1,318
Accrued employee benefits	13.	534	502
Unearned revenue	14.	1,885	2,320
Total Current Liabilities		3,701	4,140
Total Liabilities		3,701	4,140
Net Assets		684	621
Equity			
Contributed equity		79	79
Accumulated surplus		605	542
Total Equity		684	621

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Changes have been made to the comparative information for 2019-2020. See Note 1 – Early Adoption of Accounting Standards and Interpretations.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Statement of Changes in Equity
for the year ended 30 June 2021

	Note	Accumulated surplus \$'000	Contributed equity \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Balance as at 1 July 2019		195	79	274
Operating Result				
Net surplus – Special projects	7.	347		347
Balance as at 30 June 2020		542	79	621
Operating Result		4		4
Net result – Special projects	7.	59		59
Balance as at 30 June 2021		605	79	684

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Changes have been made to the comparative information for 2019-2020. See Note 1 – Early Adoption of Accounting Standards and Interpretations.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$'000	Restated 2020 \$'000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Inflows:			
Scheme fees		7,157	7,344
Special projects contribution		610	2,236
Interest receipts		25	48
GST input tax credits from ATO		305	276
GST collected from members/customers		7	5
Other		8	
Outflows:			
Employee expenses		(5,391)	(5,354)
Employee expenses - special projects			(243)
Supplies and services		(1,697)	(1,532)
Supplies and services - special projects	7.	(551)	(1,017)
GST remitted to ATO		(7)	(5)
GST paid to suppliers		(305)	(312)
Other		(29)	(33)
Net cash provided by operating activities		132	1,414
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Outflows:			
Payment for plant and equipment	10.	(33)	(31)
Payment for intangible assets	11.	(378)	(316)
Net cash used in investing activities		(411)	(347)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(279)	1,067
Cash and cash equivalents – beginning of financial year	8.	3,918	2,851
Cash and cash equivalents – end of financial year	8.	3,639	3,918

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Changes have been made to the comparative information for 2019-2020. See Note 1 – Early Adoption of Accounting Standards and Interpretations.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 1 – Basis of Financial Statement Preparation

General Information

These financial statements cover the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman trading as Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ). EWOQ has no controlled entities. The financial statements include the value of all income, expenses, assets, liabilities and equity for EWOQ as an individual entity.

EWOQ is a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for Queensland's energy consumers and water customers in South East Queensland. The Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman was established under the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*.

The Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman is controlled by the State of Queensland which is the ultimate parent.

Authorisation of Financial Statements for Issue

The financial statements are authorised for issue by the Energy and Water Ombudsman and the General Manager Strategy, Operations and Governance at the date of signing the Management Certificate.

Compliance with Prescribed Requirements

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*.

EWOQ is a not-for-profit entity and these general purpose financial statements are prepared in compliance with the requirements of Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and Interpretations applicable to not-for-profit entities.

Underlying Measurement Basis

The financial statements are prepared on an accrual basis (with the exception of the statement of cash flows which is prepared on a cash basis).

The historical cost convention is used as the measurement basis unless otherwise stated.

Presentation matters

Currency and Rounding – amounts included in the financial statements are in Australian dollars and rounded to the nearest \$1,000 or, where that amount is \$500 or less, to zero, unless disclosure of the full amount is specifically required.

Comparatives – 2019-20 comparative information has been restated as disclosed under – Early Adoption of Accounting Standards and Interpretations.

Current/Non-Current Classification – assets are classified as 'current' where their carrying amount is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting date. Liabilities are classified as 'current' when they are due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting date, or EWOQ does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement to beyond 12 months after the reporting date. All other assets and liabilities are classified as non-current.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 1 – Basis of financial statement preparation (continued)

Taxation

The Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman is exempt from income tax under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* and is exempted from the other forms of Commonwealth taxation with the exception of Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Receivables and payables in the Statement of Financial Position are shown inclusive of GST. GST credits receivable from, and GST payable to, the ATO at reporting date are separately recognised in receivable with Note 9.

Key accounting estimates and judgments

The most significant estimates and assumptions made in the preparation of the financial statements relate to the amortisation applied to intangible assets. Details set out in Note 11. The valuation of intangible assets necessarily involves estimation uncertainty with the potential to materially impact on the carrying amount of such assets in the next reporting period.

New and Revised Accounting Standards

First Time Mandatory Application of Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations

No new accounting standards applicable for the first time in 2020-21 had a material impact on EWOQ.

Early Adoption of Accounting Standards and Interpretations

AASB 138 Intangible Assets

EWOQ has reviewed the accounting and financial implications of the changes to the treatment of configuration or customisation costs of Cloud Computing arrangements (IAS 38 Intangible Assets) as determined by the International Accounting Standard Board (IASB) IFRS Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) published agenda decision April 2021.

EWOQ will apply this change of policy to the comparative information for 2019-2020 reversing the balance of Work In Progress as at 30 June 2020.

In 2019-2020 EWOQ capitalised costs associated with a new telephony system and a recordkeeping system. These systems meet the criteria of Cloud Computing arrangements. All costs associated with these systems have been removed from the 2019-2020 financial year comparative information.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 1 – Basis of financial statement preparation (continued)

Financial impact of the early adoption of changes to AASB 138 *Intangible Assets*

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

30 June 2020			
Statement of Financial Position (Extract)	Previous Amount	Adjustment	Restated Amount
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Intangible Assets	635	(319)	316
Total Non-Current Assets	667	(319)	348
Total Assets	5,080	(319)	4,761
Net Assets	940	(319)	621
Accumulated Surplus	861	(319)	542
Total Equity	940	(319)	621
 Statement of Comprehensive Income (Extract)	 Previous Amount	 Adjustment	 Restated Amount
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Net Surplus – Special Projects	666	(319)	347
Total Comprehensive Income	666	(319)	347
 Statement of Cash flows (Extract)	 Previous Amount	 Adjustment	 Restated Amount
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Cash outflows from operating activities			
Supplies and services – special projects	(698)	(319)	(1,017)
Net cash provided in operating activities	1,733	(319)	1,414
Cash outflows from investing activities			
Payment for intangible assets	(635)	319	(316)
Net cash used in investing activities	(666)	319	(347)

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 1 – Basis of financial statement preparation (continued)

Voluntary Changes in Accounting Policy

No voluntary changes in accounting policies occurred during the 2020-21 financial year.

Note 2 – Scheme fees

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
User-pays fees	7,152	7,026
Annual participation fees	305	246
Total	7,457	7,272

Accounting Policy

EWOQ is fully funded through a combination of annual participation and quarterly user-pays fees.

EWOQ invoices in advance for annual participation fees to industry scheme participants. User-pays fees are invoiced quarterly in advance based on estimated usage and then reconciled back to actuals twice a year. User-pays and annual participation fees are recognised as revenue monthly as prescribed services are performed. Payments received in advance are initially recorded as unearned revenue in Note 14.

Note 3 – Other revenue

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Bank interest	25	47
Other revenue	8	
Total	33	48

Accounting Policy

EWOQ receives bank interest and is legislated to charge scheme participants interest on unpaid fees. Both are recognised when due.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 4 – Employee expenses

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Employee Benefits		
Wages and salaries	4,024	3,953
Employer superannuation contributions	556	542
Long service leave levy	94	101
Annual leave expense	395	440
Employee Related Benefits		
Payroll tax	235	237
Workers' compensation premium	24	19
Other	95	81
Total	5,423	5,373
	2021	2020
Number of employees	43	43

The number of employees as at 30 June, including both full-time employees and part-time employees, is measured on a full-time equivalent basis.

Accounting Policy

Employee Benefits

Short-term employee benefits – wages, salaries and sick leave

Wages and salaries due but unpaid at the reporting date are recognised in the Balance Sheet at the current salary rates. As EWOQ expects such liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of reporting date, the liabilities are recognised at undiscounted amounts.

Prior history indicates that on average, sick leave taken each reporting period is less than the entitlement accrued. This is expected to continue in future periods.

Accordingly, it is unlikely that existing accumulated entitlements will be used by employees and no liability for unused sick leave entitlements is recognised. As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised for this leave as it is taken.

Other long-term employee benefits – annual and long service leave

Annual leave and long service leave liabilities are classified and measured as other long-term employee benefits as EWOQ does not expect to wholly settle all such liabilities within the 12 months following reporting date.

Other long-term employee benefits are presented as current liabilities where the office does not have an unconditional right to defer payment for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 4 – Employee expenses (continued)

All directly associated on-costs (e.g. employer superannuation contributions, payroll tax and workers' compensation insurance) are also recognised as liabilities, where these on-costs are material.

Superannuation

Superannuation benefits are provided through either defined contribution (accumulation) plans or the QSuper defined benefit plan, in accordance with employees' conditions of employment and employee instructions as to superannuation plan (where applicable).

Defined contribution plans – employer contributions are based on rates specified under conditions of employment. EWOQ's contributions are expenses when they become payable at each fortnightly pay period.

QSuper defined benefit plan – the liability for QSuper defined benefits is held on a whole-of-government basis and reported in those financial statements. Employer contributions to QSuper are based on rates determined on the advice of the State Actuary. EWOQ contributions are expensed when they become payable at each fortnightly pay period. EWOQ's obligations to the QSuper plan are limited those contributions paid.

Note 5 – Supplies and services

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Property lease and rental	598	530
Information technology	532	293
Corporate service charges	501	582
Consultants and contractors	139	185
Promotion and entertainment	58	52
Travel	37	53
Communications	33	46
Printing, stationery and office supplies	31	59
Sundries	32	113
Total	1,961	1,913

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Accounting Policy

Supplies and Services items are recorded in the period in which the expense is incurred.

The Department of Energy and Public Works (DEPW) provides EWOQ with access to office accommodation under government-wide frameworks. These arrangements are categorised as procurement of services rather than as leases because DEPW has substantive substitution rights over the assets.

EWOQ outsources corporate support services.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 6 – Other expenses

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Advisory Council fees	4	8
External audit fees*	25	21
Other		4
Total	29	33

Disclosure

* Total audit fees paid to the Queensland Audit Office relating to the 2020-21 financial statements are estimated to be \$24,900 (2020: \$20,900). There are no non-audit services included in this amount.

Note 7 – Net surplus – Special projects

	2021	Restated 2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Special projects revenue		
Scheme participants contributions	610	1,607
Total special projects revenue	610	1,607
Special projects expenditure		
Employee expenses	85	243
Supplies and services	466	1,017
Total special projects expenditure	551	1,260
Net Surplus	59	347
Special project expenditure capitalised		
Plant and equipment	10.	31
Intangible assets - Capital work in progress	11.	316
Intangible assets	11.	59
	59	347

Accounting Policy

Contributions from scheme participants has enabled EWOQ to acquire equipment and upgrade the case management system. Intangible assets completed in 2020–2021 financial year.

Changes have been made to the comparative information for 2019-2020 see Note 1 – Early Adoption of Accounting Standards and Interpretations.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 8 – Cash and cash equivalents

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Cash at bank	3,639	3,918
Total	3,639	3,918

Accounting Policy

Cash and cash equivalents include all cash and cheques receipted at 30 June as well as deposits held at call with financial institutions.

Note 9 – Receivables

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Trade debtors	167	265
	167	265
GST receivable	59	56
Long service leave reimbursements	4	42
Interest receivable		2
Total	230	365

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Accounting Policy

Trade debtors are recognised at the amounts due at the time of invoicing on a quarterly basis to scheme participants or when invoices are issued based on scheme participant's additional use of EWOQ's services above amounts paid in advance. Settlement terms are within 14 days from receipt date for scheme participants, within 30 days from invoice date for others.

The collectability of receivables is assessed periodically with provision being made for expected credit losses. All known bad debts were written off as at 30 June. The loss allowance is estimated based on the probability and timing of potential defaults and takes into account forecasts of future economic conditions as well as past events. No provision for impairment was necessary at year end.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 10 – Plant and equipment and depreciation expense

	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
Plant and Equipment		
Gross	107	74
Less Accumulated depreciation	(54)	(42)
Total	53	32
Plant and Equipment Reconciliation		
Carrying amount as at 1 July	32	2
Acquisitions	33	31
Depreciation	(12)	(1)
Carrying amount as at 30 June	53	32

Accounting Policy

Asset Acquisition

Actual cost is used for the initial recording of all non-current physical asset acquisitions. Cost is determined as the value given as consideration plus costs incidental to the acquisition, including all other costs incurred in getting the assets ready for use, including architects' fees and engineering design fees. However, any training costs are expensed as incurred.

Where assets are received free of charge from another Queensland public sector entity (usually via an involuntary transfer), the acquisition cost is recognised as the gross carrying amount in the books of the transferor immediately prior to the transfer together with any accumulated depreciated.

Assets acquired at no cost or for nominal consideration, other than from an involuntary transfer from another Queensland government agency, recognised at their fair value at date of acquisition in accordance with AASB 116 *Property, Plant and Equipment*.

Recognition of Plant and Equipment

Items of plant and equipment with a cost or other value equal to or in excess of the following thresholds are recognised for financial reporting purposes in the year of acquisition:

Plant and equipment \$5,000

Items of lesser value are expensed in the year of acquisition. Expenditure is only capitalised if it increases the service potential or useful life of an existing asset. Maintenance expenditure that merely restores original potential (arising from ordinary wear and tear etc.) is expensed.

Measurement of Non-Current Physical Assets using Cost

Plant and equipment is measured at cost. The carrying amounts for plant and equipment at cost approximate their fair value.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 10 – Plant and equipment and depreciation expense (continued)

Impairment

All non-current physical assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. If an indicator of possible impairment exists, EWOQ determines the asset's recoverable amount. Any amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds the recoverable amount is recorded as an impairment loss.

The asset's recoverable amount is determined as the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and current replacement cost.

Depreciation

Plant and equipment are depreciated on a straight-line basis so as to allocate the net cost of each asset (respectively), less its estimated residual value, progressively over its estimated useful life to EWOQ.

The estimation of the useful lives of assets is based on historical experiences with similar assets as well as consideration such as manufacturers' warranties, asset turnover practices and strategic plan. Reassessments of useful lives are undertaken annually by EWOQ. Any consequential adjustments to remaining useful life estimates are implemented prospectively.

Any expenditure that increases the original assessed capacity or service potential of an asset is capitalised and the new depreciable amount is depreciated over the remaining useful life of the asset to EWOQ.

Depreciation Disclosures

The following depreciation rates were used:

Plant and equipment	12.5–20%
---------------------	----------

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 11 – Intangibles and amortisation expense

	2021	Restated 2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Computer software internally generated		
At cost	351	
Accumulated amortisation	(60)	
Total	291	
Work in progress		
At cost	23	316
Total	23	316
Total intangible assets	314	316

	Notes	WIP		Computer Software	
		2021	Restated 2020	2021	2020
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Carrying amount 1 July		316			
Acquisitions	7.	59	316		
Transfers		(351)		351	
Amortisation				(60)	
Balance as at 30 June		23	316	291	

Accounting Policy

Intangible assets equal to or greater than \$100,000 will be recognised. These assets have been capitalised based on actual costs incurred to purchase, develop and install and will be amortised over the intangible's useful life on a straight-line basis.

Changes have been made to the comparative information for 2020 see Note 1 – Early Adoption of Accounting Standards and Interpretations.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 12 – Payables

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
User-pays fees – refunds	1,072	866
Accrued expense	210	452
Total	1,282	1,318

Accounting Policy

User-pays fees – refunds are where revenue received in advance from a scheme participant exceeds the actual service provided in respect of that scheme participant, the difference is recognised as a payable to the scheme participant at year end.

Accrued expenses represent goods and services received prior to balance date whether invoiced or not. Accrued expenses are settled in accordance with supplier payment terms.

Note 13 – Accrued employee benefits

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Current		
Annual leave	512	478
Long service leave levy payable	22	24
Total	534	502

Accounting Policy – refer to Note 4

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 14 – Unearned revenue

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Current		
Unearned revenue – user-pays fees	1,885	1,691
Unearned revenue – special projects		629
Total	1,885	2,320

Accounting Policy – refer to Note 2

Cash received from scheme participants in respect of services to be provided in the 2021-22 financial year are recognised as unearned revenue as well as the carry-over of funds received from scheme participants from projects not completed in 2020-21.

Disclosure

Our legislation requires invoices for user-pays fees are to be raised in advance and payment of these invoices is due 14 days from receipt. Timing of actual payment of these invoices by scheme participants varies.

Note 15 – Financial instruments

Financial Instruments – Accounting Policy on Recognition

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position when EWOQ becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

Financial Instruments – Classification and Presentation

Financial instruments are classified under Accounting Standard AASB 9 as follows:

	Notes	2021	2020
		\$'000	\$'000
Financial Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	8.	3,639	3,918
Receivables at amortised cost	9.	230	365
Total		3,869	4,283
Financial Liabilities			
Payables at amortised cost	12.	1,282	1,318
Total		1,282	1,318

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 16 – Key management personnel (KMP) Disclosures

Details of Key Management Personnel

The following details for key management personnel include those positions that had authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of EWOQ during 2020-21 and 2019-20. Further information about these positions can be found in the body of the Annual Report under the section relating to Executive Management.

Position	Position Responsibility
Energy and Water Ombudsman	The strategic leadership, efficient and effective management of EWOQ, including its operational and financial performance.
General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution	Responsible for leading the complaint investigation and dispute resolution functions of EWOQ.
General Manager, Strategy, Operations and Governance	Responsible for the delivery of services including governance, finance, facilities management, reporting and analysis, providing strategic advice on policies and emerging industry issues.
Manager, People, Capability and Culture	Responsible for leading strategic HR solutions and contemporary HR services to meet business and cultural development needs within EWOQ.
Manager, Communications and Engagement	Responsible for strategic communication and engagement solutions for EWOQ.

KMP Remuneration Policies

With the exception of the Energy and Water Ombudsman, remuneration policy for EWOQ's KMP is set by the Queensland Public Service Commission as provided for under the *Public Service Act 2008*.

The remuneration and other terms of employment of the Energy and Water Ombudsman are specified in the Governor in Council Appointment.

Remuneration expenses for those key management personnel comprise the following components:

Short term employee expenses which include:

- salaries and allowances earned and expensed for the entire year, or for that part of the year during which the employee occupied the specified position; and
- non-monetary benefits – consisting of provision of car parking together with fringe benefits tax applicable to the benefit.

Long term employee expenses – mainly annual leave and long service leave entitlements earned and expensed for the year, or for that part of the year during which the employee occupied the specified position.

Post-employment expenses – mainly superannuation obligations.

Termination benefits – include payments in lieu of notice on termination and other lump sum separation entitlements (excluding annual and long service leave entitlements) payable on termination of employment or acceptance of an offer of termination of employment.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 16 – Key management personnel (KMP) disclosures (continued)

The following disclosures focus on the expense incurred by EWOQ during the respective reporting periods that is attributable to key management positions. Therefore, the amounts disclosed reflect expenses recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Remuneration Expenses

2020-21

Position	Short term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses	Non-Monetary Expenses				
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Energy and Water Ombudsman	224	6	5	28	-	263
General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution	143	6	4	17	-	170
General Manager, Strategy, Operations and Governance	148	5	3	18	-	174
Manager, People, Capability and Culture	131	-	3	17	-	151
Manager, Communications and Engagement	144	-	3	18	-	165
Total Remuneration	790	17	18	98	-	923

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 16 – Key management personnel (KMP) disclosures (continued)

2019-20

Position	Short term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses	Non-Monetary Expenses				
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Energy and Water Ombudsman	231	5	5	29	-	270
General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution	150	5	4	19	-	178
General Manager, Business Support (ended March 2020)	65	5	2	8	-	80
General Manager, Strategy, Operations and Governance (from May 2020)	31	-	-	3	-	34
Manager, People, Capability and Culture	136	-	3	16	-	155
Manager, Communications and Engagement	130	-	3	15	-	148
Total Remuneration	743	15	17	90	-	865

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Performance Payments

No KMP remuneration packages provide for performance or bonus payments.

Note 17 – Related Parties Transactions

Transactions with people/entities related to KMP

EWOQ has no related party transactions to disclose this financial year.

Note 18 – Contingencies

There were no other known contingent assets or liabilities at 30 June 2021.

Note 19 – Events Occurring After Balance Date

No event has occurred after balance date that has a material effect on these financial statements.

MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE OF THE OFFICE OF THE ENERGY AND WATER OMBUDSMAN

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared pursuant to s.62(1)(a) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (the Act), s.39 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* and other prescribed requirements. In accordance with s.62(1)(b) of the Act we certify that in our opinion:

- a) the prescribed requirements for establishing and keeping the accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and
- b) the financial statements have been drawn up to present a true and fair view, in accordance with prescribed accounting standards, of the transactions of the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 and of the financial position of the office as at the end of that year; and

We acknowledge responsibility under s.7 and s.11 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* for the establishment and maintenance, in all material respects, of an appropriate and effective system of internal controls and risk management processes with respect to financial reporting through the reporting period.



Eleanor Bray
General Manager, Strategy, Operations
and Governance
Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Date 11/08/2021



Jane Pires
Energy and Water Ombudsman
Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Date 12/08/2021

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

Report on the audit of the financial report

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman.

In my opinion, the financial report:

- a) gives a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30 June 2021, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended
- b) complies with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019 and Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements.

The financial report comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes to the financial statements including summaries of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the management certificate.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report.

I am independent of the entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code and the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Responsibilities of the entity for the financial report

The Office is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019 and Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements, and for such internal control as the Office determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Office is also responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is intended to abolish the entity or to otherwise cease operations.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances. This is not done for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal controls but allows me to express an opinion on compliance with prescribed requirements.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the entity.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the entity's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. I base my conclusions on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Office regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Statement

In accordance with s.40 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, for the year ended 30 June 2021:

- a) I received all the information and explanations I required.
- b) I consider that, the prescribed requirements in relation to the establishment and keeping of accounts were complied with in all material respects.

Prescribed requirements scope

The prescribed requirements for the establishment and keeping of accounts are contained in the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, any other Act and the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019. The applicable requirements include those for keeping financial records that correctly record and explain the entity's transactions and account balances to enable the preparation of a true and fair financial report.

Irshaad Asim

Irshaad Asim
as delegate of the Auditor-General

13 August 2021

Queensland Audit Office
Brisbane

Appendices

Appendix one: Data

Table 6: Five-year received and closed by year

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Received	7,913	10,328	8,584	7,510	6,067
Closed	7,861	10,211	8,559	7,621	6,064

Table 7: Received and closed cases by month 2020-21

	Received	Closed		Received	Closed
Jul-20	521	511	Jan-21	467	474
Aug-20	462	441	Feb-21	530	521
Sep-20	538	579	Mar-21	582	580
Oct-20	486	478	Apr-21	452	476
Nov-20	508	499	May-21	537	533
Dec-20	416	406	Jun-21	568	566
			Total	6,067	6,064

Table 8: Five-year closed cases

Closed cases	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Electricity	6,636	8,838	7,231	6,386	5,038
Gas	552	732	699	593	390
Water	540	519	467	452	467
None of the above	133	122	162	190	169
Total	7,861	10,211	8,559	7,621	6,064

Table 9: Customer profile

Sector	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Residential	7,401	9,735	8,113	7,258	5,787
Small business	455	469	438	361	271
Government	5	7	8	2	6
Total	7,861	10,211	8,559	7,621	6,064

Table 10: Closed case types

Case type	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
General enquiry	857	1,052	994	732	574
Referral to another organisation	984	1,228	1,057	902	792
Refer back	3,003	3,702	2,861	2,133	1,819
Referral to higher level	1,791	2,481	2,007	1,957	1,642
Level 1 investigation	915	1,275	1,145	1,332	705
Level 2 investigation	270	405	423	475	428
Level 3 investigation	41	68	72	90	104
Final order	0	0	0	0	0
Total	7,861	10,211	8,559	7,621	6,064

Table 11: Cases referred to other organisations

Agency	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Office of Fair Trading	606	757	617	540	437
Australian Energy Regulator	54	181	241	217	256
Queensland Ombudsman	67	78	65	70	64
Department of Energy and Public Works*	-	-	-	-	15
Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy*	235	203	115	66	12
Queensland Competition Authority	9	5	4	3	3
Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water*	-	-	-	-	3
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	13	4	15	6	2
Total	984	1,228	1,057	902	792

*From 1 November 2021, referrals to Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy were redirected to Department of Energy and Public Works for energy-related issues or the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water for water-related issues.

Table 12: Performance targets – time taken to close cases

	Target	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
Less than 28 days	80%	7,209	92%	8,469	83%	7,340	86%	6,020	79%	5,249	87%
Less than 60 days	90%	7,722	98%	9,897	97%	8,350	98%	7,342	96%	5,937	98%
Less than 90 days	95%	7,811	99%	10,117	99%	8,514	99%	7,553	99%	6,029	99%
More than 90 days	< 5%	50	1%	94	1%	45	1%	68	1%	35	1%

Table 13: Potential systemic issues

Issue	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Customer service	13	35	13	24	58
Billing	35	41	27	25	52
Transfer	1	11	6	3	5
Metering	2	3	1	0	4
Provision	2	17	12	4	2
Marketing	2	12	9	8	2
Credit	1	0	0	0	0
Supply	1	0	0	0	0
Other*	5	1	8	9	5
Total	62	120	76	73	128

*includes disconnection, hardship and network assets.

Table 14: Five-year contact method

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Phone	5,619	7,089	5,760	5,013	3,597
Website	1,620	2,316	2,057	1,981	1,629
Email	511	682	630	544	595
Web chat*	-	-	-	-	204
Other	111 [†]	124 [†]	112 [†]	83 [‡]	39 [§]
Total	7,861	10,211	8,559	7,621	6,064

* web chat introduced in July 2020

[†] includes fax, letter and in-person

[‡] includes letter, in-person, Facebook and Twitter

[§] includes Facebook, fax, in-person and letter

Appendix two: Electricity data

Table 15: Electricity investigations by primary and secondary issues

Primary issue	Secondary issue	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Billing	High	179	368	280	331	223
	Estimation	57	75	104	153	91
	Error	112	122	81	139	78
	Tariff	27	21	31	64	46
	Meter	32	39	47	29	43
	Opening/closing account	51	50	43	41	31
	Rebate/concession	16	53	30	38	30
	Refund	6	13	3	14	30
	Backbill	47	34	34	42	21
	Delay	18	24	30	27	20
	Fees & charges	37	31	17	23	14
	Period	3	2	12	5	7
	Incorrect account details	7	13	8	4	4
	Re-bill	8	5	3	5	2
	Format	-	2	1	0	2
	Other	16	22	10	40	25
Total		616	874	734	955	667
Credit	Collection	166	234	190	162	98
	Payment difficulties	64	57	37	64	21
	Disconnection/restriction	88	80	130	143	9
	Hardship	-	-	11	10	6
	Privacy	1	2	5	3	4
Total		319	373	373	382	138
Provision	Existing connection	39	107	109	112	84
	New connection	7	27	17	34	15
	Disconnection/restriction	8	11	18	25	5
Total		54	145	144	171	104
Customer service	Incorrect advice or information	14	20	22	28	30
	Poor service	13	25	33	39	29
	Failure to consult or inform	5	12	12	11	10
	Failure to respond	8	8	12	5	10
	Refund	11	4	9	6	3
	Privacy	1	0	2	2	2
	Poor/unprofessional attitude	3	2	3	2	1
Total		55	71	93	93	85

Continued on next page.

Primary issue	Secondary issue	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Supply	Off supply (unplanned)	9	9	8	28	21
	Off supply (planned)	3	2	8	5	7
	Variation	7	6	5	7	6
	Quality	1	6	1	2	6
Total		20	23	22	42	40
Transfer	Without consent	17	39	37	17	8
	Delay	5	11	12	18	5
	In error	9	9	8	6	4
	Error	1	6	0	1	4
	Objection/rejected by retailer	2	8	3	2	3
	Site ownership	1	2	5	4	2
	Cooling-off rights	0	9	8	2	1
	Billing	1	2	5	2	0
Total		36	86	78	52	27
Land	Network assets	4	2	5	7	6
	Property damage/restoration	0	4	5	6	4
	Vegetation management	0	1	2	2	2
	Easement	0	1	0	0	0
	Other	0	1	1	0	1
Total		4	9	13	15	13
Marketing	Contract	2	2	1	1	2
	Misleading	1	15	2	7	1
	Information	0	0	2	1	0
	Pressure/coercion	0	2	1	0	0
	Non account holder	0	0	1	0	0
	Door to door	0	2	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	2	0	0
Total		3	21	9	9	3
Grand total		1,107	1,602	1,466	1,719	1,077

ELECTRICITY RETAILERS

Table 16: Closed electricity retailer complaints by primary issue

Primary Issue	Scheme Participant	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Billing	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	890	932	747	901	809
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	553	590	488	485	456
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	181	331	350	327
	Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd	559	538	435	388	215
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	281	332	280	230	162
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	142	620	204	131	65
	Simply Energy	24	64	33	55	54
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	38	122	81	48	52
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	43	27	19	30	42
	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	0	6	30
	QEnergy Limited	44	23	22	21	26
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	11	19	15	10	20
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	167	92	92	21	19
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd ⁴	1	20	6	24	14
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ⁵	-	16	37	13	13
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd ⁶	7	20	8	4	10
	CovaU Pty Ltd ⁷	-	-	-	0	8
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd ⁸	0	6	0	2	7
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	6	8	5	8	6
	Blue NRG Pty Ltd ⁹	-	-	-	2	6
	Sumo Power Pty Ltd ¹⁰	-	-	-	-	6
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd - Kogan ¹¹	-	-	-	0	5
	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	1	0	3	0	4
	Next Business Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	0	5	3
	OVO Energy Pty Ltd ¹²	-	-	-	0	3
	Hanwha Energy Retail Australia Pty Ltd (trading as Nectr) ¹³	-	-	-	-	2
	People Energy Pty Ltd	3	6	1	6	1
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	9	13	1	3	1
	Shell Energy Retail Pty Ltd (formerly ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd)	2	0	2	0	1
	Power Club Ltd ¹⁴	-	-	-	1	1
	Lumo Energy (Qld) Pty Ltd	116	30	7	3	0
	Discover Energy Pty Ltd ¹⁵	-	-	0	1	0
	Urth Energy ¹⁶	4	-	-	-	-
Total (Billing)		2,901	3,659	2,817	2,748	2,368
Credit	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	537	538	426	465	185
	Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd	191	199	194	198	90

Continued on next page.

Primary Issue	Scheme Participant	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Credit continued	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	202	195	165	121	79
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	20	59	108	37
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	102	106	63	42	29
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	39	71	41	21	14
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	4	7	6	7	10
	Simply Energy	0	11	8	10	6
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	47	18	33	9	6
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ⁵	-	5	11	8	4
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	1	30	23	12	3
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd ⁴	0	4	4	1	3
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	0	3	5	3	2
	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	0	1	2
	Lumo Energy (Qld) Pty Ltd	69	18	15	11	1
	QEnergy Limited	3	1	2	3	1
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd ⁶	0	8	6	0	1
	OVO Energy Pty Ltd ¹²	-	-	-	0	1
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	1	4	0
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd ⁸	0	0	1	2	0
	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	1	0	0
	Next Business Energy Pty Ltd	1	0	0	0	0
Total (Credit)		1,196	1,234	1,064	1,026	474
Customer service	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	113	146	128	150	116
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	90	132	109	65	67
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	57	80	52	60
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	28	41	23	46	27
	Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd	49	61	47	41	27
	Simply Energy	8	15	11	15	14
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	19	93	24	11	10
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ⁵	-	8	9	3	5
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	12	11	11	11	4
	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	0	1	4
	Sumo Power Pty Ltd ¹⁰	-	-	-	-	4
	QEnergy Limited	11	2	6	3	3
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	4	7	3	4	2
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	2	1	1	2	2
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd ⁶	2	1	1	2	2
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	12	5	11	0	2
	Power Club Ltd ¹⁴	-	-	-	0	2
	Blue NRG Pty Ltd ⁹	-	-	-	0	2
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd ⁴	1	1	3	5	1

Continued on next page.

Primary Issue	Scheme Participant	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Customer service continued	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd - Kogan ¹¹	-	-	-	1	1
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd ⁸	0	1	1	0	1
	Elysian Energy Pty Ltd ¹⁷	-	-	-	0	1
	Enova Energy Pty Ltd ¹⁸	-	-	-	-	1
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	10	2	2	4	0
	People Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	1	1	0
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	0	1	0
	Lumo Energy (Qld) Pty Ltd	15	5	5	0	0
	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	0	0	0
	Urth Energy ¹⁶	1	-	-	-	-
Total (Customer service)		377	591	476	418	358
Provision	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	63	203	179	176	101
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	57	226	157	80	57
	Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd	31	43	65	52	37
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	47	44	54	34
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	17	24	40	28	24
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	3	20	18	11	12
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	8	80	14	9	6
	Simply Energy	4	10	8	10	5
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	8	17	13	6	5
	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	0	2	5
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	3	6	1	3	3
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd ⁴	0	0	2	3	2
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	1	3	2
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd ⁸	0	0	0	0	2
	Online Power and Gas Pty Ltd (trading as Future X Power) ¹⁹	-	-	0	0	2
	Hanwha Energy Retail Australia Pty Ltd (trading as Nectr) ¹³	-	-	-	-	2
	CovaU Pty Ltd ⁷	-	-	-	0	1
	OVO Energy Pty Ltd ¹²	-	-	-	0	1
	QEnergy Limited	3	3	0	3	0
	Lumo Energy (Qld) Pty Ltd	4	1	5	0	0
	People Energy Pty Ltd	1	1	1	0	0
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	1	3	0	0	0
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd ⁶	1	1	0	0	0
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	0	0	0
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ⁵	-	1	0	0	0
Total (Provision)		204	687	548	440	301

Continued on next page.

Primary Issue	Scheme Participant	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Transfer	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	23	60	39	34	33
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	50	70	67	36	25
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	151	123	53	17
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	21	33	19	19	15
	Simply Energy	3	13	9	9	8
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	35	73	15	5	5
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ⁵	-	20	35	10	4
	Blue NRG Pty Ltd ⁹	-	-	-	0	4
	Sumo Power Pty Ltd ¹⁰	-	-	-	-	4
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	6	4	7	4	2
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	3	7	2	3	2
	QEnergy Limited	2	5	1	0	2
	Hanwha Energy Retail Australia Pty Ltd (trading as Nectr) ¹³	-	-	-	-	2
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	4	3	1	5	1
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	1	5	1
	Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd	4	4	2	2	1
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	1	1	1	1	1
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd ⁴	0	2	2	0	1
	Next Business Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	0	0	1
	Online Power and Gas Pty Ltd (trading as Future X Power) ¹⁹	-	-	0	0	1
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd - Kogan ¹¹	-	-	-	0	1
	CovaU Pty Ltd ⁷	-	-	-	0	1
	Elysian Energy Pty Ltd ¹⁷	-	-	-	0	1
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd ⁶	1	2	0	1	0
	People Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	0	1	0
	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	0	1	0
	Lumo Energy (Qld) Pty Ltd	10	2	0	0	0
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd ⁸	0	2	0	0	0
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	1	0	0	0	0
Total (Transfer)		164	452	324	189	133
Marketing	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	3	4	11	9	9
	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	5	10	6	11	8
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	4	1	6	12	4
	Simply Energy	3	11	2	3	4
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	12	10	5	3
	Sumo Power Pty Ltd ¹⁰	-	-	-	-	3
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	2	1	2
	Hanwha Energy Retail Australia Pty Ltd (trading as Nectr) ¹³	-	-	-	-	2

Continued on next page.

Primary Issue	Scheme Participant	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Marketing continued	Energy Locals Pty Ltd ⁸	0	0	0	0	1
	Next Business Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	0	0	1
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ⁵	-	4	10	3	0
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	1	8	3	1	0
	Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd	0	3	0	1	0
	QEnergy Limited	2	1	1	0	0
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	1	1	1	0	0
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	0	0	0
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	0	1	0	0	0
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd ⁴	0	1	0	0	0
Total (Marketing)		19	58	52	46	37
Other	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	17	25	18	28	16
	Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd	13	16	20	23	6
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	1	7	5	3
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	5	6	6	2	3
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	13	18	12	9	2
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	3	2	10	2	1
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ⁵	-	0	1	2	1
	Simply Energy	1	0	0	1	1
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd ⁶	0	0	0	1	1
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd ⁴	1	1	0	0	1
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	2	0	0	0	1
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd - Kogan ¹¹	-	-	-	0	1
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	2	3	0
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	1	2	2	1	0
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	2	3	1	0	0
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	1	1	1	0	0
	Lumo Energy (Qld) Pty Ltd	2	1	0	0	0
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	0	0	0
	QEnergy Limited	2	0	0	0	0
	Urth Energy ¹⁶	1	-	-	-	-
Total (Other)		64	78	80	77	37
Grand Total		4,925	6,759	5,361	4,944	3,708

1 Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 13 August 2017.

2 Click Energy Pty Ltd includes amaysim Energy Pty Ltd and Click Energy data. From May 2021 Click customers were migrated to AGL.

3 ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd joined the scheme August 2018.

4 Powershop Australia Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 1 November 2016.

5 1st Energy Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 9 August 2017.

6 Mojo Power joined the scheme on 14 September 2016.

7 CovalU Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 30 January 2020.

8 Energy Locals joined the scheme on 15 January 2017.

9 Blue NRG Ltd joined the scheme on 1 September 2019.

10 Sumo Power Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 15 July 2020.

11 Powershop Australia Pty Ltd - Kogan joined the scheme as a related entity on 27 September 2019

12 Ovo Energy Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 31 March 2020.

13 Hanwha Energy Retail Australia Pty Ltd (trading as Nectr) joined the scheme on 22 July 2020.

14 Power Club Ltd joined the scheme May 2019.

15 Discover Energy Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 11 September 2018.

16 Urth Energy entered into administration on 1 February 2017.

17 Elysian Energy Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 9 October 2019.

18 Enova Energy Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 1 February 2021.

19 Online Power and Gas Pty Ltd (trading as Future X Power) joined the scheme on 20 February 2019.

See Appendix 7 for the full list of authorised electricity retailers who are our scheme participants, and page 39 for the volume of complaints received for each retailer and distributor compared with their customer numbers.

ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTORS

Table 17: Closed electricity distributor complaints by primary issue

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Supply	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	60	49	55	76	69
	Energex Ltd	76	87	64	50	68
	Essential Energy	1	2	2	1	0
Total		137	138	121	127	137
Provision	Energex Ltd	54	63	71	94	84
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	49	48	36	39	42
	Essential Energy	4	5	2	3	1
Total		107	116	109	136	127
Land	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	10	9	22	27	46
	Energex Ltd	16	30	36	35	32
Total		26	39	58	62	78
Customer Service	Energex Ltd	49	54	70	48	48
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	32	23	21	22	11
	Essential Energy	0	0	1	0	1
Total		81	77	92	70	60
Billing	Energex Ltd	5	0	0	2	2
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	0	3	0	0	1
Total		5	3	0	2	3
Credit	Energex Ltd	0	0	1	0	0
Total		0	0	1	0	0
Other	Energex Ltd	46	31	25	23	31
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	7	10	6	5	10
	Essential Energy	2	0	1	1	0
Total		55	41	32	29	41
Grand total		411	414	413	426	446

Appendix three: Gas data

GAS RETAILERS

Table 18: Closed gas retailer complaints by primary issue

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Billing	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	67	71	98	88	62
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	93	106	81	64	38
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	0	0	0	2
	Red Energy Pty Ltd ²	-	-	2	3	1
	CovaU Pty Ltd ³	-	-	-	0	1
Total		160	177	181	155	104
Credit	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	29	27	29	28	16
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	12	22	23	5	11
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	0	0	0	1
Total		41	49	52	33	28
Provision	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	18	16	13	16	11
	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	9	28	21	16	3
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	0	0	0	1
	Red Energy Pty Ltd ²	-	-	2	0	0
Total		27	44	36	32	15
Customer service	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	5	17	14	6	5
	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	10	14	12	10	4
	Red Energy Pty Ltd ²	-	-	1	0	0
Total		15	31	27	16	9
Transfer	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	3	7	11	2	2
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	0	0	0	2
	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	6	7	6	7	1
	Red Energy Pty Ltd ²	-	-	3	1	0
Total		9	14	20	10	5
Marketing	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	0	0	0	1	1
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	1	0	0	2	0
Total		1	0	0	3	1
Other	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	2	2	1	1	2
	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	1	1	4	3	1
Total		3	3	5	4	3
Grand total		256	318	321	253	165

¹ Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 13 August 2017

² Red Energy Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 1 July 2018

³ CovaU Pty Ltd joined the scheme on 30 January 2020

GAS DISTRIBUTORS

Table 19: Closed gas distributor complaints by primary issue

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Provision	Australian Gas Networks Limited	11	13	14	22	13
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	2	3	1	5	2
	Western Downs Regional Council	0	1	4	0	0
Total		13	17	19	27	15
Supply	Australian Gas Networks Limited	3	11	12	7	6
	Western Downs Regional Council	0	0	0	0	1
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	4	10	6	1	0
Total		7	21	18	8	7
Customer service	Australian Gas Networks Limited	1	7	11	1	3
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	2	3	0	1	1
Total		3	10	11	2	4
Land	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	2	0	0	1	1
	Australian Gas Networks Limited	0	1	4	5	0
Total		2	1	4	6	1
Billing	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	1	0	0
Total		0	0	1	0	0
Other	Australian Gas Networks Limited	1	18	12	3	1
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	5	10	7	0	1
Total		6	28	19	3	2
Grand total		31	77	72	46	29

Appendix four: Water data

WATER RETAILERS

Table 20: Closed water retailer complaints by primary issue

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Billing	Queensland Urban Utilities	129	106	117	98	117
	Unitywater	94	66	66	54	71
	Gold Coast City Council	29	40	38	34	39
	Logan City Council	4	13	6	13	7
	Redland City Council	4	7	6	5	4
Total		260	232	233	204	238
Customer service	Unitywater	6	4	5	5	8
	Queensland Urban Utilities	8	11	14	11	6
	Gold Coast City Council	3	4	2	6	2
	Logan City Council	0	1	0	0	1
	Redland City Council	0	0	1	0	0
Total		17	20	22	22	17
Credit	Queensland Urban Utilities	12	4	6	10	6
	Unitywater	10	13	4	6	5
	Gold Coast City Council	5	10	2	0	4
	Logan City Council	1	0	1	0	1
	Redland City Council	0	1	0	0	0
Total		28	28	13	16	16
Provision	Unitywater	6	2	1	3	2
	Queensland Urban Utilities	4	3	3	0	2
	Gold Coast City Council	1	0	1	0	0
Total		11	5	5	3	4
Other	Unitywater	4	3	0	0	4
	Queensland Urban Utilities	4	1	2	6	2
	Logan City Council	0	1	0	1	0
	Gold Coast City Council	4	2	2	0	0
	Redland City Council	0	1	0	0	0
Total		12	8	4	7	6
Grand total		328	293	277	252	281

WATER DISTRIBUTORS

Table 21: Closed water distributor complaints by primary issue

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Land	Queensland Urban Utilities	8	10	20	13	17
	Unitywater	7	9	4	7	9
	Gold Coast City Council	3	0	0	1	2
Total		18	19	24	21	28
Provision	Queensland Urban Utilities	14	7	8	10	10
	Unitywater	3	5	6	3	8
	Logan City Council	1	0	0	3	1
	Redland City Council	0	0	0	1	0
	Gold Coast City Council	0	1	1	0	0
Total		18	13	15	17	19
Supply	Unitywater	3	10	0	5	5
	Queensland Urban Utilities	13	13	11	13	3
	Redland City Council	0	1	0	1	1
	Gold Coast City Council	1	0	0	0	1
	Logan City Council	0	0	1	0	0
Total		17	24	12	19	10
Customer service	Queensland Urban Utilities	1	5	8	7	3
	Unitywater	8	1	3	0	3
	Gold Coast City Council	0	0	0	1	0
Total		9	6	11	8	6
Billing	Queensland Urban Utilities	0	0	0	0	1
Total		0	0	0	0	1
Other	Queensland Urban Utilities	4	2	1	1	3
	Unitywater	3	4	1	0	2
	Gold Coast City Council	0	2	0	0	0
Total		7	8	2	1	5
Grand total		69	70	64	66	69

Appendix five: Advisory Council

Advisory Council to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ)

Act or instrument	Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006					
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitors the Energy and Water Ombudsman’s independenceProvides advice and recommendations to the Energy and Water Ombudsman about the scheme’s appropriateness, scope and effectiveness; policies and practices relating to the scheme’s administration and conduct; processes to improve how the scheme responds to stakeholder needs; and the promotion of the scheme and preparation of the annual report.Receives and considers financial budgets and business plans by the Ombudsman, including guidelines for calculating and structuring user-pays fees.Makes recommendations to the Ministers responsible for energy and water, and the Ombudsman, on the scheme’s financial budget and business plan.					
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provided advice on current and emerging issues in the energy and water sectors and the implications for an external dispute resolution service for consumers, industry and government.Met with the independent consultancy firm Cameron Ralph Khoury to discuss the draft findings and recommendations of the independent review of EWOQ.Endorsed the public release of the final recommendations from the independent review of EWOQ.Hosted a presentation by Energy Queensland regarding their 2020-25 tariff reform at our November meeting.					
Financial reporting	Transactions to the entity are accounted for in the financial statements of the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman.					
Remuneration						
Position	Name	Meetings/ sessions attendance	Approved annual, sessional or daily fee	Approved sub-committee fees if applicable	Actual fees received	
Chairperson	Anna Moynihan ¹	3 of 3	Daily fee: \$390	N/A	\$3315	
Member	Chris Owen ²	1 of 1	Daily fee: \$300	N/A	N/A	
Member	David Ackland ³	1 of 1		N/A	N/A	
Member	Iain Graham	2 of 4		N/A	N/A	
Member	Ian Jarratt	4 of 4		N/A	\$450	
Member	Jennifer Gates	4 of 4		N/A	N/A	
Member	Robyn Robinson	4 of 4		N/A	\$450	
Member	Rosemarie Price	4 of 4		N/A	N/A	
Member	Sharon Edwards	3 of 4		N/A	N/A	
Member	Wendy Miller ⁴	3 of 4		N/A	\$150	
No. scheduled meetings/sessions	5 ⁵					
Total out of pocket expenses	\$43					

¹ Term concluded on 18 February 2021

² Term concluded on 28 October 2020

³ Term concluded on 30 October 2020

⁴ Attended as a proxy for Queensland Council of Social Service

⁵ Five (5) meetings were scheduled in 2020-21, however the May 2021 meeting was cancelled because a quorum of members was not met due to a delay in approval of member nominations by the Queensland Government.

Appendix six: Compliance checklist

Summary of requirement	Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Letter of compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s 	ARRs – section 7 Page i
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table of contents 	ARRs – section 9.1 Contents Appendix 8
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glossary 	Page i
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public availability 	ARRs – section 9.2 Page i
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreter service statement 	<i>Queensland Government Language Services Policy</i> ARRs – section 9.3 Page i
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copyright notice 	Copyright Act 1968 ARRs – section 9.4 Page i
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Licensing 	<i>QGEA – Information Licensing</i> ARRs – section 9.5 Page i
General information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory Information 	ARRs – section 10.1 About EWOQ
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Machinery of Government changes 	ARRs – section 10.2, 31 and 32 N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency role and main functions 	ARRs – section 10.2 About EWOQ
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating environment 	ARRs – section 10.3 About EWOQ
Non-financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government's objectives for the community 	ARRs – section 11.1 N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other whole-of-government plans / specific initiatives 	ARRs – section 11.2 N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency objectives and performance indicators 	ARRs – section 11.3 Our performance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency service areas and service standards 	ARRs – section 11.4 Our service
Financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of financial performance 	ARRs – section 12.1 Financial summary
Governance – management and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational structure 	ARRs – section 13.1 Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive management 	ARRs – section 13.2 Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities) 	ARRs – section 13.3 Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Sector Ethics 	<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> ARRs – section 13.4 Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights 	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> ARRs – section 13.5 Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland public service values 	ARRs – section 13.6 About EWOQ

Continued on next page.

Appendix six: Compliance checklist (continued)

Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Governance – risk management and accountability	• Risk management	ARRs – section 14.1	Our governance
	• Audit committee	ARRs – section 14.2	Our governance
	• Internal audit	ARRs – section 14.3	Our governance
	• External scrutiny	ARRs – section 14.4	Our governance
	• Information systems and recordkeeping	ARRs – section 14.5	Our governance
Governance – human resources	• Strategic workforce planning and performance	ARRs – section 15.1	Our people
	• Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	Directive No.04/18 ARRs – section 15.2	Our people
Open Data	• Statement advising publication of information	ARRs – section 16	Our governance
	• Consultancies	ARRs – section 33.1	data.qld.gov.au
	• Overseas travel	ARRs – section 33.2	Our governance
	• Queensland Language Services Policy	ARRs – section 33.3	data.qld.gov.au
Financial statements	• Certification of financial statements	FAA – section 62 FPMS – sections 38, 39 and 46 ARRs – section 17.1	Financial statements
	• Independent Auditor's Report	FAA – section 62 FPMS – section 46 ARRs – section 17.2	Independent Auditor's Report

FAA *Financial Accountability Act 2009*

FPMS *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*

ARRs *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*

Appendix seven: Scheme participants

All licensed retailers and distributors who supply energy to small customers in Queensland (and water in South East Queensland) must become members of our scheme (scheme participants). EWOQ is predominantly funded by an industry levy paid by the scheme participants.

Scheme participant	Product type	Service type	Scheme participant	Product type	Service type
1st Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Lumo Energy (Qld) Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Maranoa Regional Council	Gas	Distributor and Retailer
AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	Gas	Retailer	Metered Energy Holdings Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer
Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer	Mojo Power Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	Gas	Distributor	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
amaysim Energy Pty Ltd (also trading as Click Energy Pty Ltd)	Electricity	Retailer	Next Business Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Australian Gas Networks Limited	Gas	Distributor	Online Power and Gas Pty Ltd (trading as Future X Power)	Electricity	Retailer
Blue NRG Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Bright Spark Power Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	Gas	Retailer
Gold Coast City Council	Water	Distributor and Retailer	OVO Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer
Click Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	People Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
CovaU Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer	Power Club Limited	Electricity	Retailer
Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Discover Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd*	Electricity	Retailer
Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	QEnergy Limited	Electricity	Retailer
Elysian Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Queensland Urban Utilities	Water	Distributor and Retailer
Energex Ltd	Electricity	Distributor	Radian Holdings Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Energy Locals Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Redland City Council	Water	Distributor and Retailer
Energy Services Management Pty Ltd (trading as Glow Power)	Electricity	Retailer	Red Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer
Enova Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	Electricity	Distributor	Shell Energy Retail Pty Ltd (formerly ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd)	Electricity	Retailer
Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Simply Energy	Electricity	Retailer
Essential Energy	Electricity	Distributor	Social Energy Australia Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Globird Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer	Sumo Power Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Hanwha Energy Retail Australia Pty Ltd (trading as Nectr)	Electricity	Retailer	Unitywater	Water	Distributor and Retailer
Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Western Downs Regional Council	Gas	Distributor and Retailer
Logan City Council	Water	Distributor and Retailer			

* Sales and marketing activities conducted by Kogan Energy

Appendix eight: Glossary

Billing a case issue relating to high or disputed bills, delays, errors, estimated accounts, fees and charges, rebates or concessions, tariff, meters, refunds, etc.

Case any contact a customer has with EWOQ including general enquiry, refer back to supplier, referral to higher level, investigation, or referral to another organisation.

Complaints these are cases that are billed to a scheme participant i.e. refer back to supplier, referral to higher level and investigation.

Credit a case issue relating to payment difficulties, disconnection, bad debt, etc.

Customer service a case issue relating to a scheme participant's failure to inform or respond, incorrect advice, poor attitude, privacy issues, etc.

Embedded network a site (such as apartment blocks, retirement villages, caravan parks and shopping centres) where the electrical wiring is configured in such a way that the site owner on-sells energy to tenants and residents.

EWOQ Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

Exempt seller an energy seller who only sells energy incidentally at a specific site to a defined group of customers.

General enquiry a customer has a query about electricity, gas or water that is not a complaint.

Investigation a complaint that EWOQ investigates and facilitates an outcome that is fair. Investigations can be Level 1, 2 or 3 depending on the time taken to resolve the issue.

Land a case issue relating to the impact of network assets, network maintenance, vegetation management, etc.

Marketing a case issue relating to conduct by energy marketers, misleading information, pressure, non-account holder signed up, etc.

Provision a case issue relating to problems with new or existing connections, etc.

Refer back when a customer has not contacted their provider first to try and resolve their issue prior to submitting their complaint to EWOQ we refer the complaint back to the provider.

Referral to higher level (RHL) EWOQ can refer a customer's complaint to a higher level of authority within the supplier before starting an investigation.

Referral to other organisations EWOQ have memoranda of understanding with other government authorities who have jurisdiction over aspects of the energy or water sector outside our jurisdiction, including Department of Energy and Public Works; Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water; Office of Fair Trading; and Australian Energy Regulator.

Scheme participant energy distributors and retailers operating in Queensland and water distributors and retailers in South East Queensland who must join the EWOQ scheme.

Small customer is a residential or small business customer who uses less than 100 megawatt hours of electricity per year, less than one terajoule of gas per year, and all residential water customers in South East Queensland who use less than 100 kilolitres of water per year.

Supply a case issue relating to the quality of energy supply, damage or loss, outages, sewerage overflow, etc.

Transfer a case issue relating to errors in billing or transfer of account due to switching energy retailers, contract terms, delay in transfer, site ownership, etc.

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